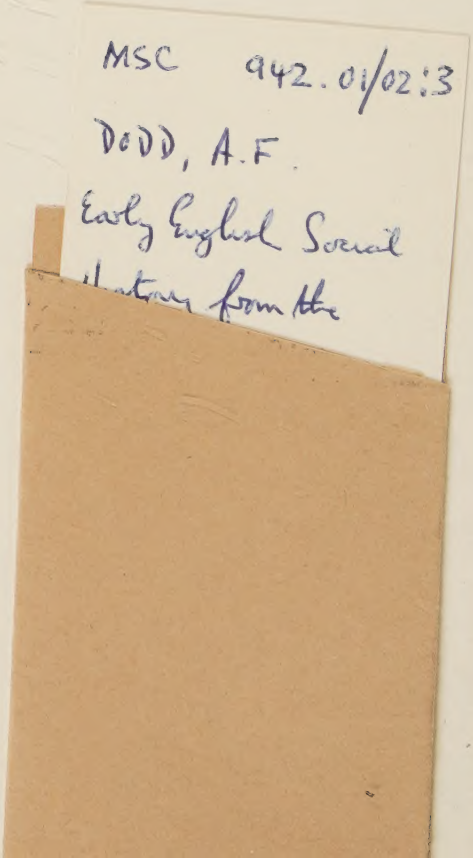
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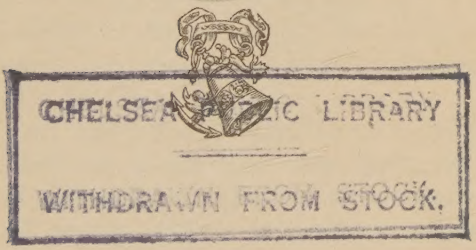
EARLY ENGLISH SOCIAL HISTORY

FROM THE CHRONICLES

BY

AGNES F. DODD

LECTURER ON HISTORY AT THE GRAYSTOKE PLACE DAY TRAINING COLLEGE, LONDON



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PREFACE

Those who have had experience in teaching history to children know that the chief difficulty of their work lies in supplying an effective historical background for the events and characters of a remote period. Children care nothing about the bare facts of history, but they like to hear how people lived, and take as keen an interest in the daily life of the ordinary people as in the more striking events of the lives of kings and princes. They want detail—not the facts of the students' text-book—but detail which centres round a few main incidents, and by means of which they can gain a more intimate knowledge of the characters and events that they are studying, and can reconstruct for themselves in some measure the life of the past.

It is this detail that it is so difficult to get either from the ordinary textbook which gives bare facts, or from the larger works of reference which go more deeply into the meaning of history, and an attempt has been made in this book to supply what is felt to be a real need. A consecutive narrative of the Anglo-Saxon period has been given, but on very broad lines, and, where possible, it has been given in the words of the chroniclers, for they bring the children into more direct touch with the past, and the simplicity of their language often gives

a force and directness to the narratives that it is impossible to gain from any second-hand account.

In the selection of the extracts and narratives, the principle followed has been to take not only those of great political importance, but those which, though unimportant in themselves, have value in illustrating the life and character of the time: such are, for instance, the narratives of Turgar and the sack of Croyland Abbey by the Danes, and the account of the capture of Southwark Bridge by Olaf. To supply material for the historical background some knowledge of social and domestic conditions is needed, and this aspect of history, though it is one of the first importance, and one that by experience has been found to have the most direct appeal to the interest of children, has hitherto been greatly neglected in the schools. To supply this, chapters have been given on the social and domestic life of the time as an aid to teachers in making history a subject of real and living interest to their pupils. Though written primarily for teachers, it is hoped that this method of dealing with history will appeal as well to the interest of the historical student and of the general reader.

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THE ANGLO-SAXONS

CHAPTER I

CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT

1. The English in Germany.

The tribes that overran Roman Britain were a branch of the Teutons, who, urged on by the need for fresh pasture land and by the pressure of the Huns in the East, were everywhere encroaching on the borders of the Roman Empire, already doomed by internal decay. The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were all of Low German origin; they came from the low-lying lands bordering on the North Sea, and may already have come into contact with the Romans, whose trade extended as far as the Baltic. Our knowledge of their economic and social conditions comes almost entirely from the descriptions given by Roman historians of tribes on the borders of the Empire, whose organisation and institutions must have been very similar. The account given by Tacitus of the Folkmoot, the assembly of the tribe, which every freeman could attend, shows that they enjoyed a measure of political freedom: "The chiefs and princes determine some affairs of less importance; all the rest are reserved for the general assembly. Yet even these, the decision of which is vested in the people, are beforehand discussed by the chiefs. . . . At these assemblies they take their

seats all of them armed. Silence is commanded by the priests, whose business it is at such times to maintain order. Then the king or chief speaks first; afterwards the great men are heard in their turns with that attention which is due to their age, their nobility, their reputation in war, their eloquence, greater deference being paid to their power of persuasion than to their personal authority. If their advice displeases, the people reject it with a general murmur; if it is approved of, they clash their lances. It is the most honourable way of expressing their assent or of conferring praise—to do it by their arms. . . . The kings are chosen for their noble birth; the leaders or generals for their personal valour. The power of the kings is not arbitrary, but limited. The leaders are not so much to give orders as examples; they must signalise themselves by their courage and ability, and their authority must be founded on esteem and admiration." The Pagus was a division of the tribe for military and judicial purposes. The village was the economic unit, and the people forming the village group were held together by the tie of kinship. The tribes described by Julius Cæsar were just emerging from the nomadic stage and beginning to form permanent village settlements; but long afterwards traces of the older system remained, and Tacitus noticed that the tribes further south, who were living under more settled conditions, still changed the plough lands annually.

Every freeman was a soldier, and it was only as a warrior that a man could gain honour. At the age of fifteen a youth, entering on manhood, received the arms of a freeman—a shield, lance, and spear—from his father or guardian at the public meeting, and henceforth he was not only a member of the family but also of the state, and had to take his share in the work of a man—

in hunting and war. In the later days of the Roman Empire bands of these warriors were fighting as mercenaries in the Roman armies. The tribes who had settled on the shores of the German Ocean were seamen as well as warriors, and they had attained a certain degree of civilisation. They could construct wheeled vehicles, build ships, and were skilled in working in wood and iron. They were acquainted with the use of money, and had the Runic alphabet of sixteen letters, though writing was very little used. Their gods were the gods of nature, of whom the chief was Woden, the All Father, the protector of ways and boundaries, from whom all princes and kings claimed descent. Traces of the old Teutonic religion have been left in the language in the names of the days of the week, and in a few other words: in "Easter" from "Eostre," the Goddess of the Dawn; in "Yule," the heathen festival of the New Year; and in the "Wyrd" (weird), or fate, to which both gods and men had to submit.

2. The Conquest.

The history of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain is for the most part wrapped in mystery, for no English chronicles were written until some centuries later, and the contemporary writings of British chroniclers—Gildas and Nennius—give a general description of the sufferings of the people, but nothing in the form of a connected history. It is certain, however, that the Roman rule in Britain, as in other provinces, must have become thoroughly disorganised long before the Roman legions were withdrawn, that the Romans were finding it more and more difficult to defend the northern boundary against the attacks of the Picts and Scots, and that not only were the Teutons constantly attacking the

eastern coast, but that Teutonic settlements were made there by agreement with the Romans, the Count of the Saxon Shore being appointed to have supervision over these settlers, and not only to defend the coast against them. But the growing disorganisation before was as nothing to the terror and desolation that must have spread over the land after the legions were withdrawn. "No sooner were they gone than the Picts and Scots, like worms which in the heat of midday come forth from their holes, hastily landed again from their canoes. . . . Moreover, having heard of the departure of our friends (the Romans) and their resolution never to return, they seized with greater boldness than before on all the country towards the extreme north as far as the Wall. To oppose them there was placed on the heights a garrison, equally slow to fight and ill-adapted to run away, a useless and panic-stricken company, who slumbered away days and nights on their unprofitable watch. Meanwhile the hooked weapons of their enemies were not idle, and our wretched countrymen were dragged from the Wall and dashed against the ground. . . . They left their cities, abandoned the protection of the Wall, and dispersed themselves in flight more desperately than before. The enemy, on the other hand, pursued them with more unrelenting cruelty than before and butchered our countrymen like sheep, so that their habitations were like those of savage beasts; for they turned their arms upon each other, and for the sake of a little sustenance imbrued their hands in the blood of their fellow-countrymen. Thus foreign calamities were augmented by domestic feuds, so that the whole country was entirely destitute of provisions save such as could be procured in the chase. . . .

"Again, therefore, the wretched remnant, sending to

Ætius, a powerful Roman citizen, addressed him as follows: 'To Ætius, now Consul for the third time: the groans of the Britons.' And again, a little further, thus: 'The barbarians drive us to the sea; the sea throws us back on the barbarians; thus two modes of death await us: we are either slain or drowned.' The Romans, however, could not assist them, and in the meantime the discomfited people, wandering in the woods, began to feel the effects of a severe famine, which compelled many of them without delay to yield themselves up to their cruel persecutors to obtain subsistence. Others of them, however, lying hid in mountains, caves, and woods, continually sallied out from thence to renew the war" (Gildas).

In some of the caves of the North of England, traces have been found of their occupation by the Romanised Britons at this time in the form of personal ornaments, articles of iron and bronze, coins, broken earthenware, etc. Spindle-whorls extemporised out of pieces of earthenware are evidence that the refugees were cut off from civilisation, and were forced to adapt themselves to a half-savage life in these retreats.

In the early part of the fifth century the danger and disturbance caused by the inroads of the Teutonic tribes must have rapidly increased, and the withdrawal of the Roman population after the Romans had left was steadily going on. Probably many of them emigrated to Armorica, which about this time began to be known as the land of the Britons, and there is an entry in the Chronicle to the effect that in 418 the Romans "gathered together all the gold hoards that were in Britain and hid some in the earth, so that no man henceforth should ever find them, and some they took with them into Gaul."

Little is known of the events of this period, and there is no need to attach importance to the tale that Vortigern invited the aid of the Teutons against the Picts, though it is repeated by most of the chroniclers. According to these accounts Vortigern, who had made himself king over the Britons, was hated by the people, and especially by the Picts and Scots, some of whom had entered his service, and in his reign "shameful wickedness stalked abroad, and hatred of truth and contempt of God." When the Picts rose against him he asked the help of the Saxons, and Hengist and Horsa, descendants of Woden, came with three ships of war and fought for him. As a reward they were given land in Thanet, and Vortigern married Rowena, the daughter of Horsa. On the pretext that further help was needed, eighteen more ships were sent for from Germany, and when they arrived the Teutons began to conquer the land for themselves. In its essential features this tale may be true. Vortigern was probably not a king but a powerful landowner who, after the departure of the Romans, exercised something like royal authority, and it is quite possible that he allied himself with the Jutes and married the daughter of the Jutish chieftain; but in any case this would be only one incident in the struggle, and the importance attached to it by later historians has been much exaggerated. The subsequent conquest of Kent was a work of some time and difficulty, and it was thirty years before the district was subdued. The Jutes settled as well in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, but their settlements were not large.

The Saxons settled along the south and south-east coast. One band under Aella and Cissa landed near Chichester in 477, and swept along the coast until they were stopped by the Roman fortress of Anderida, which

withstood them for some time, until they finally took it, and "slew all that were therein." The kingdom of Sussex, shut in between the sea and the Weald, the great forest which then covered almost the whole district between the coast and the Thames, was never more than a strip of land along the coast, and was not of much political importance. The East Saxons were also prevented from penetrating far into the land by marshes and forests, but managed to gain possession of the important trading town of London.

More connected details are known about the early history of Wessex. The tribes that were led by Cerdic and Cynric sailed up Southampton Water, and landed at a spot where an opening in the forests enabled them to penetrate into the land. It was in the West that the struggle with the Britons was most severe and the work of conquest most difficult, though it is impossible to say whether this was due to the configuration of the country, to the fact that a good deal of the eastern coast had been already settled by Teutons, or to the better organisation of the Britons in the West. Ambrosius Aurelianus and Arthur, the British leaders, were probably Romano-British generals, though the tales that have grown up round the name of Arthur are purely mythical. The Battle of Mount Badon, or Badbury, fought some time between 500 and 516, checked the advance of the Saxons for at least thirty years; but later on in the century they gained, by the Battle of Deorham (577), the Roman fortresses of Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, with the surrounding districts, and pushed as far as the Bristol Channel, thus cutting off Wales from West Wales (Cornwall and Devon). A few years later a defeat at Feathanlea, the site of which is unknown, added to domestic strife, checked their advance. Gradually, however, they

spread along the Thames Valley, and though they did not gain London, Wessex was by far the largest and strongest of the Saxon kingdoms.

The Angles landed on the east and north-east coasts. The kingdom of East Anglia, formed by the union of the North Folk and South Folk, was shut in by the marshes and fen lands of the Wash, and of the districts south of the Wash. The kingdom of Northumbria consisted of Bernicia, the northern province, which extended from the Tyne to the Forth, and was said to have been founded by Ida, and Deira, which extended from the Tyne to the Humber. With the exception of Wessex, the Anglian settlements were larger than the Saxon, for the longer rivers enabled the invaders to penetrate farther into the land, and the last kingdom to be formed—Mercia, the March or border land—was settled by Angles already in England, by way of the Trent.

All the east of the country had been overrun fairly rapidly, and by the middle of the sixth century the Teutons held all the land east of a line drawn from Berwick-on-Tweed through Lichfield to Salisbury. As they went farther west their progress was much slower. By the Battle of Chester, fought in 607 or 613, the Angles penetrated to the western coast, and cut off the Welsh from their fellow-countrymen in the North ; but Cumberland was not conquered until the end of the seventh century, and was not then thoroughly subdued. West Wales did not come under English control until the ninth century, and Wales was not conquered at all. The Roman settlers had only gradually withdrawn, and the resistance of the natives had been stubborn all over the country, though much more prolonged towards the West. It is difficult to say what proportion of the British remained in the conquered districts as a subject race,

and how far the survivors migrated westwards. Probably a considerable number remained, and among these there must have been a large proportion of women and slaves; at any rate, the Celtic strain was sufficiently strong to modify Teutonic institutions, and to leave traces on language and custom.

As the work of the conquest was gradually completed, the Anglo-Saxons began to settle down with the political and social institutions they had had in Germany, somewhat modified by the difference of the country and the results of conquest, and in some districts by Celtic influence; but all traces of Roman civilisation and administration disappeared much more completely from Britain than from the countries farther to the south. This was due to the fact that Britain had always been an outlying province of the Empire, and had never been so thoroughly Romanised as Gaul. The Celtic language can never have been superseded by Latin, and must always have been kept up in the country districts; Celtic tribal customs and village life must have continued all through the Roman period, and, except for the payment of tribute, the country population may have been little affected by the alien civilisation with which they were brought into such close contact. Hence the influence of Roman civilisation in Britain at the time when the Teutons spread over the land was not strong enough to subdue and modify Teutonic custom, as in Gaul and Spain, and what was left of the Roman civilisation was only the outer shell—the roads, towns and fortresses, and for most of these the invaders had little use. The continuity of town life was not maintained as it was in Gaul, for the Saxons preferred to settle in the country; and, as they could ruin trade and cut off supplies, the towns cannot have been safe places

of refuge for the natives; thus they were gradually deserted and fell into decay. It is not likely that there were many cases like that of Anderida, where the Roman fortress was actually taken and destroyed, for the Anglo-Saxon weapons were not suited to this sort of warfare, and the destruction of a fortress must have been a severe and unnecessary tax on their energies. In some cases the towns may have been destroyed, for, where medieval towns such as York and Chester grew up on the sites of Roman cities, there is little to suggest that they were formerly Roman, though parts of the walls may have been left standing. Even if towns were not entirely destroyed they were probably sacked and plundered and left to decay, or gradually dismantled to get building material. Verulam, for instance, was deserted in this way. The Abbey of St. Albans was built entirely from the material found in or near the town, and the medieval town of St. Albans grew up in the vicinity of the Abbey, neglecting the old site altogether. It was not until the tenth century that the Roman town was finally dismantled, at the instance of the Abbot of St. Albans, on the ground that its cellars and ruined houses afforded shelter to bad characters.

There must have been a considerable number of ruined Roman towns and castles scattered about the country during the Anglo-Saxon period. Ethelwerd, for instance, a seventh-century chronicler, mentions the Roman "cities, castles, bridges, and streets of admirable construction which are seen amongst us even to the present day," and Bede, writing in the seventh century, says that the island was "formerly embellished with twenty-eight noble cities, besides innumerable castles, which were all strongly secured with towers, gates, and locks." The Roman roads were also left, and must have been of

considerable use in enabling the Teutons to spread over the country. Some place-names remain, but most of the Latin words in the language were brought in at a later period.

3. Settlement.

Thus, as city life, to which they were unaccustomed, had no attraction for them, the Anglo-Saxons avoided the traces of Roman civilisation and formed their settlements in clearings of the forests, becoming less warlike and more exclusively agricultural as the danger from the Britons decreased. There has been a great deal of discussion on the questions whether the Celtic element remained and to what extent, and whether the villages formed were groups of free cultivators, or whether the cultivators were from the first dependent on a lord. With regard to the first of these questions, in most districts there must have been some British left in the position of slaves or dependent cultivators, and in some cases entire Celtic hamlets remained, though probably in subjection to a Teutonic lord. Among the Teutons there were probably from the first both elements —the lord with his followers and dependents, and the group of free cultivators.

(*a*) *The Lord of the Thegns.*—The relationship between the lord and the dependents was an institution which had been brought over by the Teutons from the Continent, and is described by Tacitus in his account of the Germans: "Extreme youth does not exclude from the rank of prince or chief those whom their noble birth or the distinguished merit of their fathers entitle to this dignity. As they advance in age and acquire esteem, other young warriors attach themselves to them and swell their retinue. Nor does anyone blush to be

seen among these attendants or followers. Yet they have different degrees of rank, which are regulated by the chief's own judgment. Among the followers is great emulation who shall stand highest in the chief's or prince's favour; among the princes who shall have the most numerous and valiant attendants. This is their dignity and their strength, to be always surrounded with a body of chosen youths. This is their glory in peace, their security in war. . . . In battle it would be a disgrace to the chief to be excelled in courage by any of his followers; a disgrace to his followers not to equal their chief. Should he perish they would be exposed to the highest infamy through life if they should survive him, and escape from battle. . . . The chiefs fight for victory—they for their chief. . . . To retain their followers in their service, no prince or chief has any other resource but war. . . . His table, rudely served, but with great abundance, serves them instead of pay."

Very much the same sort of relationship between the lord and his followers is described in the poem of Beowulf. Among the Anglo-Saxons the followers of the chieftain were known first as his gesiths or companions, and later, as the difference in rank increased, as thegns or servants. The thegns looked to the chief not only to lead them in battle but to provide for them in the intervals of peace, and to reward them with the plunder taken from the enemy. The chieftain is often spoken of as the Hlaford, or giver of bread, as the giver of rings and bracelets, and generosity in bestowing gifts was a virtue only second to valour. "So shall a young man act in noble wise by splendid money gifts among his father's friends that afterwards, in later years, willing companions may stand by him and the folk may do him service when war comes . . . to give all things to young

and old whatever God had given him except only dominion and the lives of men" (Beowulf).

It was the duty of the thegns on their part to fight for the lord and to defend him even at the cost of their own lives. In the last fight of Beowulf it is told how most of his thegns, "sons of nobles" though they were, would not stand by him, but "shrank back into the woods and took care of their lives," and how one only, the thegn Wiglaf, went to his aid. "To me," he said, "it does not seem fitting that we should carry back our bucklers to our home unless we may first fell the foe and shield our lord's life." And when they crept out of the woods after the fight was over, and "in shame bore their shields where the old chief lay," he rebuked them, telling them they would be branded as cowards and outlaws for the part they had taken in that day's strife. "Each mortal of your family will have to wander, shorn of citizen rights, as soon as the nobles far and wide hear of your flight and your despicable act. Better is death to anyone of noble birth than an inglorious life." In Anglo-Saxon history there are several instances of thegns giving up their lives for their lord. The best known, perhaps, is that of Lilla, the thegn of Edwin of Northumbria (617-633), who saved the life of his lord when an assassin, Eumer, had been sent by the King of the West Saxons to slay him. "He came to the King on the first day of the Easter festival at the River Derwent, where there was then a royal township, and being admitted as if to deliver a message from his master, whilst unfolding in cunning words his pretended embassy, he started up on a sudden, and, unsheathing the dagger under his garment, assaulted the King. When Lilla, the King's most devoted servant, saw this, having no buckler at hand to protect the King from

death, he at once interposed his own body to receive the blow; but the enemy struck home with such force, that he wounded the King through the body of the slaughtered thegn" (Bede).

There is also the case in the eighth century of Cyneheard, a Prince of Wessex, who claimed the crown and surprised and slew King Cynewulf, to whose thegns he offered wealth and honours if they would submit and take him for their lord; but they refused, and though they were outnumbered, fought until they were all slain rather than survive their lord.

Soon after they came to England many of these thegns must have received land and settled down to an agricultural life, but all through the Anglo-Saxon period the greater nobles and the kings had their war-bands and their personal followers, and the term "thegn" in later Anglo-Saxon times is used with the meaning of landowner or official indifferently.

(*b*) *The Village.*—As the Anglo-Saxons settled down on the land the economic unit was the village and not the isolated homestead, for the village organisation was what they had been accustomed to in Germany, and the disturbed condition of the country during the period of conquest made combination for defence a necessity. The village consisted of a little group of families bound together in the first instance by the tie of kinship, by which, however, was meant supposed descent from a common ancestor rather than any close relationship; but the tie of kinship soon began to be loosened, and from the earliest days of settlement union for purposes of war and the gathering of thegns round a chief must have supplied motives for aggregation in which kinship had little or no part. By the family or household was meant a larger group than what we now understand by

the term, and it included the head of the household, all members of his family, whether married or not, in so far as they were under his protection, and in many cases, in addition, dependent cultivators or slaves. Each homestead consisted of a little plot of land on which were built the house and probably also huts for the dependents or slaves, and sheds for cattle, the whole enclosed by a fence or hedge. Every householder was master of his own homestead, and severe penalties were imposed on anyone who broke through the fence and unlawfully entered another man's land or house. Even a wrongdoer was safe for a time if he took refuge in his own house, for by a law of Alfred an avenger of blood was forbidden to break into a man's house until he had besieged it seven days. At the end of that time the house might be broken into, but if the man surrendered before, he was allowed to go, unarmed and unscathed, for thirty days, during which time his friends might make peace for him by money compensation.

Besides possessing the homestead every householder had a share in the arable, pasture, meadow, and waste lands that were the common property of the village. In every village there were two or three large fields set aside for ploughing, on which the food-supply of the village was raised, and there was a rough system of rotation of crops. In villages where the three-field system was adopted, the field sown with wheat one year would grow barley and oats the next, and the third year would lie fallow. The cultivated fields would be divided into strips. Each householder would receive a certain number of strips, which would be scattered about the field, and the strips of the lord, if there was a lord, would be scattered amongst those of the peasants. The fields lay open, and the land of one man was only divided

from that of his neighbours by narrow strips of turf known as "balks." Each strip was an acre or half an acre, and an acre was supposed to be the amount that could be ploughed in one day, but in early days measurements were not very definite, and the size of the acre probably varied in different districts. The length of the foot was the most elementary land measurement, and the yard of 3 feet corresponded to the pace. The rod, pole, or perch ($5\frac{1}{2}$ yards) was the width of the furrow, and the length of the furrow, or the furlong, was forty times the width. The strip—$5\frac{1}{2}$ yards wide by 220 yards long—was the rood, and 4 roods made an acre. This long, narrow strip was the most general form of the acre, but it was not uniform.

The normal size of the family holding in the early days was the hide of 120 acres, and though this was much larger than the normal holding of the peasant cultivator in later Anglo-Saxon times, it must be remembered that the standard of cultivation in early days was probably very low, and that a comparatively large tract of land was required to raise even a moderate food-supply, and also that the family of the peasant in later times would not be likely to include dependent cultivators and slaves. Whether the householder had a permanent right of ownership in his strips or whether they were periodically redistributed has been disputed, but it is now generally considered that he had permanent ownership. He could not, however, cultivate them as he liked, and would have to sow the same crops as the rest of the villagers. Ploughing was always done by oxen, and the full team for the hide was eight oxen.

There was some land permanently set aside as pasture land for the village, and the cattle were fed also on the arable land in the intervals between seed-time and

harvest and on the land left fallow. The meadow land used for growing hay was left open the greater part of the year, but each man enclosed his own portion with temporary hedges or fences before the harvest, removing them again after the hay harvest was over. The waste or woodland adjacent to the village was used to feed swine, which were very plentiful, and it could also be used to get fuel.

From early times there must have been some men who had no share in the common lands, but who did work for the village, and were paid for their labour by produce—the swineherd, cowherd, shepherd, smith, etc.—and these men had a regular allowance made to them.

Until a much later time villages in England had to be practically self-sufficing. They had no food except what was grown or produced on the village land, and the clothes for the villagers were made from the coarse woollen and linen cloth which had been spun and woven in the village. Other industries that must have been carried on in every village were the work of tanning and dressing hides—for leather was very generally used—the making of household utensils of clay or earthenware, and the making of ploughs, agricultural implements, and weapons. The only necessaries which had to be brought in from outside were salt and iron, and in some districts millstones.

The houses of the villagers were very simple, and were built of wood, clay, or wattles, the roof thatched with reeds or straws, and the floor probably not even paved. As a rule there was only one room, where the family lived and slept, and there was no furniture except a bench or a few stools and some cooking utensils. The fire was built up in the middle of the floor, the smoke escaping through a hole in the roof.

The village was surrounded by a hedge or tûn (town) as a means of protection.

(*c*) *Early Custom.*—These little groups of villages looked after their own affairs, and regulated the intercourse among their members and the outside world according to tribal custom with very little interference from higher authorities. Codes of laws issued by later kings merely explained those customs in definite language or modified them, and it is mainly from these laws that our knowledge of tribal custom comes. The tie of kinship was still very strong, and it was his kindred to whom a man looked for protection, and who were responsible for him if he did wrong. The chief crimes that had to be dealt with in early times were crimes of violence, especially manslaughter and stealing. If a man was slain, it was the duty of his kinsmen in early times to avenge him, and though gradually, in place of the blood-feud, there grew up the system of money compensation, known as the "wergeld," traces of the older custom remained for a long time. From the laws of Ine (688-726) it is clear that, though it was made compulsory to accept money compensation if it was offered, it was not yet compulsory to pay it if the kindred of the slayer preferred the blood-feud. The wergeld varied with the rank of the slain man, and had to be paid to his kindred, but the law did not interfere at all if a man slew one of his own relatives, for that was a family matter, which was left to the kinsmen to settle as they pleased. A man would also expect to be supported by his kindred. If he had slain a man he would expect them to pay the wergeld, and, if he was accused of any crime that could not be openly proved and he could bring them to swear for him, he was discharged without being sent to the ordeal. A man could, if he wished,

cut himself off from his kindred. In this case he would call a public meeting, at which he would denounce their offences; then he would take a bough in his hands, and, holding it above his head, break it in pieces and scatter them to the wind, thus typifying the way in which he banished his family. After this he had no liability for any acts committed by his kindred nor could he claim their help. It was also possible for the kindred to cast off an undesirable member and the lot of the kinless man was very hard, for he had no place in society; he was an outlaw, a "wolf's head," and if he committed any offence he could be slain with impunity, for he had no kindred to demand justice for him.

A stranger coming from a distance, whose kindred were far off and unknown, was liable to receive much the same sort of treatment as the kinless man. "If a far-coming man or a stranger journey through the wood out of the highway, and neither shout nor blow his horn, he is to be held for a thief, either to be slain or redeemed" (Law of Ine). Another law shows that responsibility for strangers staying in a village rested with their host. "If a man entertained a stranger for three nights in his own house, a chapman or any other that has come over the March, and then fed him with his own food, and he then do harm to any man, let the man bring the other to justice and do justice for him." Regulations were needed as well to settle disputes that were liable to arise in connection with the cultivation and use of the common lands. "If churls have a common meadow or other partible land to fence, and some have fenced and some not, and cattle stray in and eat up their common grass and corn, those who own the gap must pay compensation. If there be a beast who

breaks hedges and goes in everywhere, and he who owns it cannot or will not restrain it, let him who finds it in his field take it and slay it. Let the owner keep the skin and flesh, and forfeit the rest."

(*d*) *Classes of the People.*—The chief division of classes in early days was into the free and the unfree. There were two classes of freemen—the "eorls" and the "ceorls." The eorls were of noble birth and generally wealthy, but enjoyed no special privileges. The ceorl was the ordinary freeman; he was the townsman who had a homestead and a share in the common lands of the village; he had a voice in any matters that concerned the township, and he had a right to attend the folcmoot, and at a later time the local courts of the Hundred and Shire, either in person or through his representatives. He had the right to bear arms; he was the "free-necked man," who had never bowed his neck to a lord, and if he was slain his kindred had the right to demand a wergeld of 200 shillings. He had duties as well as rights; he had to help to maintain the bridges and fortresses, and he could be called upon to serve in the "fyrd," the army of the freemen, in a war of defence.

There were some classes of the people that were half free. From very early days there must have been dependent freemen working upon the land of a lord; there were the war-bands of the chieftains and their servants, and there were many men, probably in some cases whole villages, of British descent who were not slaves, but were not regarded as the equals of the Anglo-Saxon freeman.

Slavery was an institution which the Teutons had brought over with them from the Continent. There were many ways in which slavery could be accounted for. Many of the British who remained had become slaves, and prisoners taken in war could be reduced

to slavery. Slavery was hereditary, and a man could be born a slave; he might have been sold as a slave by his parents when he was a child, or he might have been forced by pressure of poverty to sell himself to slavery, for there were many who had "bowed their heads for bread in the evil days." Again, a man might be a "wite theow," one who was reduced to slavery for crime, if the fine incurred by the offence had been paid neither by himself nor his kindred. The slaves, or theows, were not a very numerous class, and, though in early days the master had the power of life and death over his slaves, they do not seem on the whole to have been badly treated.

The "Ealdormen" were the magistrates, and "Reeve" was the term generally used for an official, whether appointed by the villagers or the King.

CHAPTER II

THE HEPTARCHY AND THE CHURCH*

When the work of conquest was over and the race struggle was continued only in the extreme West, there begins the period generally known as the Heptarchy, though it could not be definitely asserted at any time that the country was actually divided into seven kingdoms. Politically it was a period of coalescence, when the small settlements formed by the tribes as they took root in the country were being welded into larger states under kings instead of petty chieftains, and when the most powerful states were striving among themselves for supremacy. Four kingdoms in succession—Kent, Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex—gained overlordship, and subjected the weaker states over a considerable part of the country to their authority. At the end of the sixth century Ethelbert of Kent had control over most of the land south of the Humber. Kent, the first state to become settled, and by its position best fitted to carry on trade with the Continent, was rather more advanced than other parts of England. It was too small, however, and from its geographical position not well suited to maintain supremacy, and overlordship passed to those kingdoms which bordered on Welsh territory, and which consequently had to maintain a

* Unless otherwise stated the extracts in this chapter are taken from Bede's "Ecclesiastical History of the English People."

more active military organisation. Edwin of Northumbria, the first king to take the title of Bretwalda, subdued all England with the exception of Kent, which was in alliance with him; but after his death at the Battle of Heathfield (633), Northumbria lost its political pre-eminence, and supremacy passed to Mercia, though it was not until the reign of Offa (757-796) that Mercia reached the height of its power. In the early part of the ninth century Wessex took the lead. The power of Mercia was crushed at the Battle of Ellandun (828), and Egbert of Wessex had supremacy over the whole country, but he was only overlord, not direct ruler. The Danish invasions were soon to withdraw the north and centre from West Saxon control, and political unity was still a long way off.

1. The Roman Mission.

The chief feature of the seventh century was the gradual conversion of the country to Christianity. The British were still Christian and kept up their Church organisation in the West, but race hatred was so strong that no attempts to convert the Teutons were made, and even after the English had become Christian no amalgamation of the Welsh and the English Churches was possible. How far the British, who were living among their conquerors as a subject race, kept up their religion it is impossible to say; we hear of one British prince who came over from Brittany to try and maintain the faith among a remnant of his race at Nottingham, but he was slain by the Saxons at the altar of his church, and we hear no more.

(*a*) *Kent.*—The impulse to conversion came from Rome itself, where the interest of Gregory had been roused by the sight of the English slaves in the market-

place. On his accession to the papacy as Gregory I., a mission of forty priests was sent from Italy. But the enterprise seemed to them too hazardous, and they had not gone farther than Provence when "they were seized with craven terror, and began to think of returning home rather than proceed to a barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving nation, and to whose very language they were strangers, and by common consent they decided that this was the safer course. At once Augustine, who had been appointed to be consecrated bishop if they should be received by the English, was sent back, that he might by humble entreaty obtain of the blessed Gregory, that they should not be compelled to undertake so dangerous, toilsome, and uncertain a journey. The Pope in reply sent them a letter of exhortation, persuading them to set forth to the work of the Divine Word, and rely on the help of God." Thus encouraged they continued their journey, providing themselves with interpreters from the land of the Franks —probably men who had traded with the English, and so had gained some knowledge of the language—and landed in the island of Thanet, then divided from the mainland by the River Wantsum. King Ethelbert, whose wife Bertha, daughter of the King of the Franks, was a Christian, was not unwilling to receive them, and gave orders that they should stay for the time in Thanet, and that their needs should be provided for. After a few days he came himself to Thanet, and a conference was held in the open air, for it was thought that the magic arts which the new-comers might practise would have less power there than in an enclosed space. "But they came indeed with divine, not with magic power, bearing a silver cross for their banner, and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board; and

chanting litanies they offered up their prayers to the Lord. . . . When they had sat down in obedience to the King's commands and preached to him and his attendants then present the Word of Life, the King answered thus: 'Your words and promises are fair, but because they are new to us and of uncertain import, I cannot consent to them so far as to forsake that which I have so long observed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from far as strangers into my kingdom, and as I conceive are desirous to impart to us those things which you believe to be true and most beneficial, we desire not to harm you, but will give you favourable entertainment, and take care to supply you with all things necessary to your sustenance; nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as you can to your religion.'" They were allowed, consequently, to live and preach in Canterbury, where there was already the little church of St. Martin, used by Bertha, and they soon began to make converts, the King himself becoming a Christian and encouraging them in their work, though he would not force the new religion on the people, "for he had learnt from those who taught him that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary." A little later Augustine built up or repaired the Church of St. Saviour, which he had been told was a Roman Church, and also built a monastery to the east of the city.

When it was evident that Christianity was making way among the people, he went to the Continent to be consecrated Archbishop of the English nation, and sent two of his priests to the Pope to report on their work and ask for advice. The letter and messages sent by the Pope in reply to the infant Church show a wise spirit of charity and moderation. The clergy were not

ordered to keep strictly to the Roman customs, but might, if they thought it advisable, use the customs of the Gallican, or of some other Church—"Choose, therefore, from every Church those things that are pious, religious, and right; and when you have, as it were, made them up into one bundle, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto." The clergy were to live together, and to have all things in common, as in the days of the primitive Church. Clerks in holy orders below the rank of sub-deacon were to be allowed to marry, and to live apart from the rest; but supervision was to be kept over them. With regard to the distribution of Church property, one-fourth was to be used for the bishop and his household and for the maintenance of hospitality, one-fourth for the clergy, one-fourth for the help of the poor, and one-fourth for repair of the churches. In order to persuade the people to accept the new faith their heathen temples were not to be destroyed, "but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let water be consecrated and sprinkled in the said temples; let altars be erected, and relics placed there. For if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more freely resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And because they are used to slaughter many oxen in sacrifice to devils, some solemnity must be given them in exchange for this. . . . On Christian festivals and Saints' days let them build huts of the boughs and trees about those churches which have been turned to that use from being temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting."

After Kent, the land of the East Saxons, which was subject to Ethelbert, was converted, and Mellitus was sent there as bishop, and built the Church of St. Paul's, in London, on the site of a former temple of Diana. Some attempt was made to effect a union with the British Church in the West, but race hostility was still too strong, and nothing came of it.

(*b*) *Northumbria.*—The next part of the country to be converted was Northumbria, which had been formed into a strong kingdom by Ethelfrith, who had united Bernicia and Deira, and ruled over all the land from the Humber to the Forth. He had won a great victory over the British at Chester—important because it had done the same work for the North that the Battle of Deorham had done for the South, and had cut off the British in Wales from their fellow-countrymen in Strathclyde. This battle was marked by a savage slaughter of the monks who had come from Bangor to help the British with their prayers. Seeing them standing apart from the army, Ethelfrith inquired who they were, and on hearing that they were monks, replied: "If they cry to their God against us, in truth, though they do not bear arms, yet they fight against us, because they assail us with their curses." He ordered them to be attacked first, and out of twelve hundred who had come to pray, only fifty escaped. A little later, in 617, Ethelfrith was himself defeated and killed on the banks of the Idle by Edwin, an exiled prince of the Deiran royal family, who now became King of Northumbria.

It was in Edwin's reign that Northumbria became Christian. Edwin asked for the hand of Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert of Kent, in marriage, and at first met with refusal on the ground that "it was not lawful to give a Christian maiden in marriage to a pagan

husband"; but when he promised to allow her to exercise her faith undisturbed, and even held out hopes that he might be converted himself, the marriage was allowed, and in 627 Ethelburga was sent north with her priest Paulinus. Edwin allowed Paulinus to preach, though he did not at once become a Christian himself; but after his escape from death at the hands of the assassin Eumer, and his subsequent victory over the West Saxon King, he received instruction in the new faith, and held a conference with his Witan to decide whether it should be adopted. Each counsellor was asked his opinion in turn, and the words of one of the royal thegns have been preserved: "O King, the present life of man, in comparison of the time which is hidden from us, is as when you are sitting in your hall at your repast with your thegns and attendants in the winter season, with a fire lighted in the middle, the apartment warm, but the chilling storms of rain and snow raging everywhere without, a sparrow rapidly flies through, entering at one door and instantly escaping by another. While it is within it is not touched by the winter's storm, but, after having passed through a very short space of security, it goes forthwith from storm to storm, and vanishes from your sight. So also seems the short life of man: what follows or what precedes we know not; if therefore this new doctrine brings us something more certain, it is also my opinion it should be adopted." The High Priest, Coifu, was one of the first to declare in favour of the new doctrines: "This long time I have perceived that what we worshipped was naught; because the more diligently I sought after truth in that worship, the less I found it. But now I freely confess that such truth evidently appears in this preaching as can confer on us the gifts of life, of salvation, and of eternal happiness.

For which reason my counsel is, O King, that we instantly abjure and set fire to those temples and altars which we have consecrated without reaping any benefit from them." The King agreed, and it was decided that Coifu should be the first to desecrate them. "He desired the King to furnish him with arms and a stallion that he might mount and go forth to destroy the idols; for it was not lawful before for the High Priest either to carry arms or to ride on anything but a mare. Having therefore girt a sword about him, with a spear in his hand he mounted the King's stallion and went his way to the idols. The multitude beholding it thought he was mad, but as soon as he drew near the temple he did not delay to desecrate it by casting into it the spear which he held; and, rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he commanded his companions to tear down and set on fire the temple with all its precincts." Edwin, therefore, "with all the nobility and a large number of the common sort," received the faith, and was baptised on Easter Day.

Edwin, the first king to take the title of Bretwalda, was the greatest sovereign who had yet ruled in England, and had supremacy over all the other states except Kent, which was in alliance with him. He built the town of Edinburgh as a northern outpost of his lands, and within his own kingdom he established an era of greater peace and prosperity than had been known in the land since the Romans left. It is told that there was then "such perfect peace in Britain and wheresoever the dominion of King Edwin extended that, as is still proverbially said, a woman with a new-born babe might walk throughout the island from sea to sea without receiving any harm. That the King took such care for the good of his nation that in several places where

he had seen clear springs near the highways, he caused stakes to be fixed, with copper drinking-vessels hanging on them, for the refreshment of travellers; nor durst any man touch them for any other purpose than that for which they were designed, either through the great dread they had of the King, or for the affection which they bore him. His dignity was so great throughout his dominions that not only were his banners borne before him in battle, but even in times of peace, when he rode about his cities, townships, or provinces with his thegns, his standard-bearer was always wont to go before him. Also when he walked anywhere along the streets, that sort of banner which the Romans call 'Tufa,' and the English 'Thuaf' (a tuft of feathers attached to a spear), was in like manner borne before him."

The overlordship of Northumbria, however, was not destined to last, for the power of Edwin roused the jealousy of other kings, and Penda, the heathen King of Mercia, joined the British Prince Cadwalla against him—the first instance of an alliance between Celt and Teuton—and Edwin was overthrown, defeated, and killed at the Battle of Heathfield (633). With his death fell not only the political supremacy of the North, but Christianity, which was for the time overthrown as well. Ethelburga and Paulinus fled to Kent, taking with them the gold cross and chalice and other treasures of Edwin, and the people rapidly relapsed into heathenism.

A heathen reaction had set in as well in the South. In Kent, after the death of Ethelbert and Augustine, the hold that Christianity had taken of the people began to relax, though the new King was a Christian and did his best to maintain the faith. In Essex, after the death of the Christian King Sabert, his three sons relapsed into paganism, and, rushing into the church where

Mellitus was officiating, demanded the white bread which he had given to their father, and when it was refused, the Christian priests were driven out. In East Anglia the old and the new gods were worshipped side by side. Everywhere the people were relapsing into heathenism, for the work of conversion had been more rapid than thorough, and a much longer time was needed before the old religion and customs could be stamped out.

2. The Celtic Church.

(*a*) *Aidan.*—The work of conversion had to be started afresh, and it was begun first in the North by the Celtic monks of Iona, who belonged to the Irish Church, and with whom Oswald, the next King of Northumbria, "a man beloved of God," had spent two years in exile. In 635 Oswald returned to England to make war on Cadwalla, who had occupied the province of the Northumbrians for a whole year, "not ruling them like a victorious King, but ravaging them like a furious tyrant." A decisive battle was fought at a place afterwards known as Heavenfield, and before the battle a great wooden cross was erected by Oswald. "Then we are told that the cross being made in haste, and the hole dug in which it was to be set up, the King himself, in the ardour of his faith, laid hold of it and held it upright with both his hands till the earth was heaped up by the soldiers, and it was fixed. Thereupon, uplifting his voice, he cried to his whole army: 'Let us all kneel together and beseech the true and living God Almighty in His mercy to defend us from the proud and cruel enemy, for He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation.'" In the battle Cadwalla was defeated and killed, and splinters from the wood of Oswald's cross

worked miracles many years after. "Even to this day many are wont to cut off small splinters from the wood of the holy cross and put them into water, which they give to sick men or cattle to drink, or they sprinkle them therewith, and these are presently restored to health."

After the battle Oswald returned to Iona to ask that some monks might be sent to try and bring the people back to Christianity, but the first missionaries who came found them too hostile, and returned in despair. In the meeting held to decide whether it would be possible to make another attempt, Aidan suggested that the cause of failure might not lie only in the hardness of the people. "Methinks, brother, that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been, and did not at first, conformably to the apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine." All present looked to Aidan, "a man of singular gentleness, piety, and moderation," to carry on the work, and it was under his guidance that Christianity first gained a real hold on the North of England. Aidan enjoyed the active help and co-operation of Oswald, and "when the Bishop, who was not perfectly skilled in the English tongue, preached the Gospel, it was a fair sight to see the King himself interpreting the Word of God to his ealdormen and thegns, for he had thoroughly learnt the language of the Scots during his long banishment." The Celtic monks were attracted to remote sites, and their first monastery was built at Lindisfarne on Holy Island, "which place, as the tide ebbs and flows, is twice a day enclosed by the waves of the sea like an island, and again twice, when the beach is left dry, becomes contiguous with the land." Other monks soon came over, and a school was formed there for English boys who

could be educated as monks and carry on the work. It was Aidan who was the life and soul of the work at first, and set an example which others could follow. "He taught nothing that he did not practise in his life among his brethren; for he neither sought nor loved anything of this world, but delighted in distributing immediately among the poor whom he met whatsoever was given him by the kings or rich men of the world. He was wont to traverse both town and country on foot—never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity—to the end that, as he went, he might turn aside to any whomsoever he saw, whether rich or poor, and call upon them, if infidels, to receive the mystery of the faith, or, if they were believers, strengthen them in the faith, and stir them up by words and actions to giving of alms and the performance of good works. His course of life was so different from the slothfulness of our times that all who bore him company, whether they were tonsured or laymen, had to study either reading the Scriptures or learning psalms. . . . If it happened, which was but seldom, that he was invited to the King's table, he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a little food, made haste to be gone, either to read with his brethren or to pray. . . . Never through fear or respect of persons did he keep silence with regard to the sins of the rich, but was wont to correct them with a severe rebuke. . . . He used the money he received either for the poor or for ransoming such as had been wrongfully sold for slaves."

In 642 Oswald was slain by Penda at the Battle of Maserfeld, and was succeeded by Oswy, his brother, who at length overthrew and slew Penda at the Battle on the Winwaed in 655. Peada, who succeeded Penda, was a Christian, and under his rule Mercia was gradually con-

verted. Oswy, too, encouraged the Church, and the work of conversion went on steadily, though it was often a work of difficulty and danger, for the old faith and the old customs were tenacious, and in any time of trouble the people always tended to revert to the old gods. Several times we hear of them relapsing into heathenism at a visitation of plague, which they thought was caused by the anger of the old gods at their desertion. At the building of the monastery of Tynemouth, five ships which were carrying timber to the monastery were blown out to sea by a gale, and when the monks gathered on the rocky shore to pray for their brethren, the peasantry assembled in crowds and jeered. "No one shall pray for them," they said, "they have taken away the ancient worship, and no one knows how this new worship is to be performed." Yet though the work went on slowly it was very thorough; there was no general relapse into heathenism, and the latter half of the seventh century was a time of extraordinary religious activity. A great number of monasteries and churches were built, and were richly endowed with land by the kings and nobles, and men and women of noble and princely rank withdrew from the world to adopt the monastic life. At the same time the North was the centre of learning, and education reached a higher level there at that time than it was to reach again for many centuries. Among the large number of saints and religious leaders of the North, it is impossible to do more than give a sketch of a few of the best known—Cuthbert, Hilda, Bede, and Wilfrid.

(*b*) *Cuthbert.*—Cuthbert was a son of a Northumbrian thegn, and from his childhood he had a strong desire for a religious life. We hear of him later as a robust youth, dismounting when on a journey to pray in a

wayside church while his servant held his horse and spear, and when still a young man he entered the monastery of Melrose on the banks of the Tweed, of which after some years he became Prior. Here "he instructed many in the rules of the monastic life, both by the authority of a master and the example of his own behaviour. Nor did he bestow his teaching and his example in the monastic life on his monastery alone, but laboured far and wide to convert the people dwelling round about from the life of foolish custom to the love of heavenly joys, for many profaned the faith which they held by their wicked actions; and some also, in the time of a pestilence, neglecting the mysteries of the faith which they had received, had recourse to the false remedies of idolatry, as if they could have put a stop to a plague sent from God, by incantations, amulets, or any other secrets of the Devil's art. In order to correct the error of both sorts, he often went forth from his monastery, sometimes on horseback but oftener on foot, and went to the neighbouring townships, where he preached the way of truth to such as had gone astray. . . . It was then the custom of the English people that when a clerk or a priest came to a township, they all, at his summons, flocked together to hear the Word, willingly heard what was said, and still more willingly practised those things that they could hear and understand. And such was Cuthbert's skill in speaking, so keen his desire to persuade men of what he taught, such a light shone in his angelic face, that no man present dared to conceal from him the secrets of his heart; but all openly revealed in confession what they had done, thinking doubtless that their guilt could in nowise be hidden from him, and having confessed their sins, they wiped them out by fruits worthy of repentance as he

bade them. He was wont chiefly to resort to those places, and preach in those villages which were situated afar off amid steep and wild mountains, so that others dreaded to go thither, and whereof the poverty and barbarity rendered them inaccessible to other teachers. But he, devoting himself entirely to that pious labour, so industriously ministered to them with his wise teaching, that when he went forth from the monastery he would often stay a whole week, sometimes two or three, or even sometimes a full month, before he returned home, continuing among the hill-folk, to call that simple people by his preaching and good works to the things of heaven."

After many years' work in the neighbourhood of Melrose, he was removed by the Abbot to Lindisfarne, and here, when he was forty-five years of age, he was seized with the desire for a more solitary life of devotion, and withdrew to the little island of Farne, about nine miles distant. "When he was about to go to the island, he declared to his brothers: 'If by the grace of God it shall be granted to me that I may live in that place by the labour of my hands, I will willingly abide there; but if not, God willing, I will very soon return to you.' The place was quite destitute of water, corn, and trees, and being infested by evil spirits, was very ill suited for human habitation; but it became in all respects habitable at the desire of the man of God, for at his coming the wicked spirits departed. When, after expelling the enemy, with the help of the brethren he built himself a narrow dwelling, with a mound about it and the necessary cells in it, to wit—an oratory and a common living room—he ordered the brothers to dig a pit in the floor of the room, although the ground was hard and stony, and no hopes appeared of any spring.

When they had done this, relying on the faith and prayers of the servant of God, the next day it was found to be full of water, and to this day affords abundance of its heavenly bounty to all who resort thither. He also desired that instruments of husbandry might be brought him and some wheat, and he having prepared the ground and sown the wheat at the proper season, no sign of a blade, not to speak of ears, had sprouted from it by the summer. Hereupon when the brethren visited him according to custom, he ordered barley to be brought him, if haply it were either the nature of the soil, or the will of God, the Giver of all things, that such grain rather should grow there. He sowed it in the same field when it was brought him after the proper time of sowing, and therefore without any likelihood of its bearing fruit; but a plentiful crop immediately sprang up, and afforded the man of God the means which he had desired of supporting himself by his own labour. . . .

"When he had served God in solitude many years, the mound which encompassed his dwelling being so high that he could see nothing from it but heaven, which he thirsted to enter, it happened that a great synod was assembled, and there Cuthbert was, with one mind and consent of all, chosen Bishop of the Church at Lindisfarne. They could not, however, draw him from his hermitage, though many messengers and letters were sent to him. At last the aforesaid King himself, with the most holy Bishop Trumwine, and other religious and powerful men, sailed to the island; many also of the brothers from the Isle of Lindisfarne itself assembled together for the same purpose; and they all knelt and conjured him by the Lord, with tears and entreaties, till they drew him, also in tears, from his beloved retreat, and forced him to go to the synod. When he arrived he

was very reluctantly overcome by the unanimous resolution of all present, and compelled to take upon himself the duties of the episcopate."

As Bishop of Lindisfarne, his see included the whole province of Northumbria, and, though he continued his ascetic life, Cuthbert at the same time actively carried on the work of his diocese, preaching, and giving help and counsel to all who came to him, for, genial and friendly to all, "he deemed that to comfort and advise the weak was equivalent to an act of prayer." Working with the energy of a younger man, he travelled about to the remotest districts of his diocese, and to villages where no church had as yet been built. After two years spent in this work, feeling that his end was approaching, he withdrew again to his hermitage, where he died soon after.

(*c*) *Hilda.*—The life of Hild, or Hilda (614-680), is an illustration of the life of an abbess in the seventh century. Many women of royal and noble birth who had hitherto gone to the Continent, if they wished to devote themselves to the service of God, were now placed at the head of monasteries in England. In the early days there were a good many double monasteries founded both for monks and nuns, and though the separation of the sexes does not seem to have been very strictly enforced at first, monks and nuns often living in different parts of the same building, soon separate houses were built, but close to one another and forming one monastery, which was often under the rule of a woman. Bede gives the following account of Hild: "Her life falls into two equal parts—for the first thirty-three years of it she spent most nobly in the secular habit; and still more nobly dedicated the remaining half to the Lord in the monastic life. For she was nobly born, being the daughter of

Hereric, nephew to King Edwin, and with that King she also received the faith and mysteries of Christ at the teaching of Paulinus. . . . When she had resolved to quit the secular habit and to serve Him alone, she withdrew into the province of the East Angles, for she was allied to the King there, being desirous to cross over thence into Gaul, forsaking her native country and all that she had, and so to live a stranger for our Lord's sake. . . . She continued a whole year in the aforesaid province with the design of going abroad; but afterwards Bishop Aidan recalled her to her home, and she received land to the extent of one family (one hide) on the north side of the River Wear; where likewise for a year she led a monastic life with very few companions. After this she was made Abbess in the monastery called Heruteu. . . . Hilda, the handmaid of Christ, being set over that monastery, began immediately to order it in all things under a rule of life, according as she had been instructed by learned men; for Bishop Aidan and others of the religious that knew her frequently visited her, loved her heartily, and diligently instructed her, because of her innate wisdom and love of the service of God. When she had for some years governed this monastery, wholly intent upon establishing a rule of life, it happened that she also undertook either to build or to set in order a monastery in the place called Streoneshalh, and this work which was laid upon her she industriously performed; for she put this monastery under the same rule of monastic life as the former, and taught them the strict observance of justice, piety, chastity, and other virtues, and particularly of peace and charity; so that after the example of the primitive Church, no one there was rich and none poor, for they had all things in common, and none had any private property. Her

prudence was so great, that not only meaner men in their need, but sometimes even kings and princes, sought and received her counsel; she obliged those who were under her direction to give so much time to reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of justice that many might readily be found there fit for the priesthood and the service of the altar. Thus the handmaid of Christ, the Abbess Hilda, whom all that knew her called Mother, for her singular piety and grace, was not only an example of good life to those that lived in her monastery, but afforded occasion of amendment and salvation to many who lived at a distance, to whom the blessed fame was brought of her industry and virtue.

"There was in the monastery of this Abbess a certain brother, marked in a special way by the grace of God, for he was wont to make songs of piety and religion, so that whatever was expounded to him out of the Scriptures, he turned ere long into verse expressive of much sweetness and penitence in English, which was his native language. By his songs the minds of many were often fired with contempt of the world, and desire of the heavenly life. Others of the English nation after him attempted to compose religious poems, but none could equal him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from man, neither was he taught by man; but by God's grace he received the free gift of song, for which reason he never could compose any trivial or vain poem, but only those which concern religion it behoved him his religious tongue to utter. For having lived in the secular habit till he was well advanced in years, he had never learned anything of versifying; and for this reason sometimes at a banquet, when it was agreed to make merry by singing in turn, if he saw the harp come

towards him he would rise up from table and go out and return home.

"Once having done so, and gone out of the house where the banquet was to the stable, where he had to take care of the cattle that night, he here composed himself to rest at the proper time. Thereupon one stood by him in his sleep, and saluting him and calling him by his name, said: 'Cædmon, sing me something.' But he answered: 'I cannot sing, and for this cause I left the banquet and retired hither because I could not sing.' Then he who called to him replied: 'Nevertheless, thou must sing to me.' 'What must I sing?' he asked. 'Sing the beginning of Creation,' said the other. Having received this answer, he straightway began to sing verses to the praise of God the Creator, which he had never heard, the purport whereof was after this manner: 'Now must we praise the Maker of the Heavenly kingdom, the power of the Creator his counsel, the deeds of the Father of Glory. How He, being the eternal God, became the Author of all wondrous works, who, being the Almighty Guardian of the human race, first created heaven for the sons of man, to be the covering of their dwelling-place, and next the earth.' This is the sense but not the order of the words as he sang them in his sleep; for verses, though never so well composed, cannot be literally translated out of one language into another without loss of their beauty and loftiness. Awaking from his sleep, he remembered all he had sung in his dream, and soon added more, after the same manner, in words which worthily expressed the praise of God.

"In the morning he came to the reeve who was over him, and having told him of the gift he had received, was conducted to the Abbess, and bidden, in the presence

of many learned men, to tell his dream and repeat the verses that they might all exercise and give their judgment on the nature and origin of the gift whereof he spoke. And they all judged that heavenly grace had been granted to him by the Lord. They expounded to him a passage of sacred history or doctrine, enjoining upon him if he could, to put it into verse. Having undertaken this task, he went away, and returning the next morning, gave them the passage he had been bidden to translate, rendered in most excellent verse. Whereupon the Abbess, joyfully recognising the grace of God in the man, instructed him to quit the secular habit, and take upon him monastic vows, and having received him into the monastery, she and all her people admitted him to the company of the brethren, and ordered that he should be taught the whole course of sacred history. So he, giving ear to all that he could learn, and bearing it in mind and, as it were, ruminating like a clean animal, turned it into the most harmonious verse; and sweetly singing it, made his masters in turn his hearers. He sang the Creation of the World and the Origin of Man, and all the history of Genesis, the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, their entrance into the promised land, and many other histories from Holy Scripture, the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of our Lord, his ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost and the teaching of the Apostles. Likewise he made many songs concerning the terror of future judgment, the horror of the pains of hell and the joys of heaven; besides many more about the blessings and the judgments of God, by all of which he endeavoured to draw men away from the love of sin, and excite in them devotion to well-doing and perseverance therein. For he was a very religious man, humbly

submissive to the discipline of monastic rule, but inflamed with fervent zeal against those who chose to do likewise; for which reason he made a fair ending of his life."

(*d*) *Bede.*—Bede lived the quiet, uneventful life of scholar and writer, and very little is known of his life except for the few short notices that he gives about himself in his works. He was born in 672 or 673 in the North of England, and at the age of seven was sent to the Monastery of Wearmouth, then under the rule of Benedict Biscop, to be educated. A little later, when the Monastery of Jarrow was founded as an offshoot of Wearmouth, he was transferred there with some of the monks, of whom Ceolfrid was in control. We know no other detail about his childhood except from the anonymous account of the plague of 686, which devastated the monasteries of that district, and there is some reason to believe that the child referred to here was Bede himself:—"In the monastery over which Ceolfrid presided, all who could read or preach or recite the antiphons and responses were swept away, except the Abbot himself and one little lad nourished and taught by him, who is now a priest of the same monastery, and both by word of mouth and by writing, commends to all who wish to know them the Abbot's worthy deeds. And the Abbot, sad at heart because of this visitation, ordained that, contrary to their former rite, they should, except at vespers and matins, recite their psalms without antiphons. And when this had been done, with many tears and lamentations on his part for the space of a week, he could not bear it any longer, but decreed that the psalms, with their antiphons, should be restored according to the order of the regular course; and, all assisting, by means of himself and the assisting boy, he carried out with no

little labour that which he had decreed, until he could either train himself or procure from elsewhere, men able to take part in the Divine service."

Bede, as soon as he was old enough, became a monk and a priest, and spent the whole of his life in the monastery, "devoting," as he said, "all my pains to the study of the Scriptures, and amid the observance of monastic discipline and the daily charge of singing in the church, it has ever been my delight to learn, teach, or write." The daily life of the monastery was taken up with prayer, manual work, and study. Rising at midnight, or a little later, for the service of matins, and then retiring to rest again for about five hours—he began the work of the day about 6 or 7 a.m. The morning was devoted chiefly to religious exercises and study, at about eleven o'clock was the hour of dinner, and after that came the midday rest, followed by work of various sorts until five or six o'clock. All had to take part in the manual work of the monastery, in agriculture, gardening, baking, brewing, or cooking, or in the work of artisans, for the monastery had to supply all its own needs. Eostwine, even after he was abbot, continued to take part in this work, and Ceolfrid at one time acted as baker to the monastery. Some of the monks were still sent out, as in the time of Cuthbert, to teach and preach in remote villages, and they also taught and helped the poor of the neighbourhood, and so much was done for the people by the monks that villages very often grew up in the vicinity of monasteries. The work in which Bede took most interest was that of study, teaching, and writing, and his best-known work is the "Ecclesiastical History of the English People." His great object in writing was to help his fellow-men, and he laid little claim to originality; he always gave very careful refer-

ences to authorities in his theological works, and asked future copyists to note these; but little attention was paid to his wishes in this respect. He must have had untiring industry, for the whole work of copying and writing had to be done by himself, as Jarrow had not, like many of the larger and later monasteries, a staff of trained copyists. Bede, too, probably had to work in the unsheltered and unwarmed cloisters, and the intense cold of the winter often made the work of writing difficult, if not impossible.

Living on as he did into the eighth century, the relaxation of discipline and the deterioration of morals that had set in in the Church was a source of great grief to him, and he constantly laments the evils of "our miserable times," though the change did not affect his own monastery until after his death. The well-known account of his last days is given by one of his pupils: "The last few weeks after Easter he gave lessons daily to us his disciples, and the rest of the day he occupied himself, so far as his strength allowed, in chanting the Psalms, and all the night, too, he passed cheerfully in prayer and giving of thanks to God, except only when a light slumber hindered him. . . . I can with truth declare that I never saw with my eyes, or heard with my ears, anyone return thanks so unceasingly to the living God. . . . In those days, moreover, besides the lessons which he gave us daily and the chanting of the Psalms, there were two works very worthy of mention which he laboured to complete." By the Tuesday before Ascension Day it was evident that his end was approaching. "But all that day he taught and dictated cheerfully, and among other things, he would say from time to time: 'Learn speedily, I know not how long I may be with you, or whether my Maker will remove me shortly. . . .'

And thus in giving of thanks he wakefully passed the night. And when the morning broke—that is the Wednesday—he bade us write diligently what he had begun, and this we did up to the third hour. But from the third hour we walked in procession with the relics of the saints, as the custom of that day required. One, however, of us remained with him, who said: 'There is still one chapter wanting of the book which thou hast been dictating, and it seems hard for thee to be questioned further.' 'Nay,' said he, 'it is easy, take thy pen and mend it, and write quickly'—and he did so. But at the ninth hour he said to me: 'I have a few treasures in my casket—that is some pepper, napkins, and incense; but run quickly and call the priests of the monastery to me that I may distribute to them such gifts as God has given me.' And in great agitation I did so. And he addressed them generally and severally, exhorting and beseeching them diligently to offer masses and prayers for him, which they gladly promised; and they all wept and lamented, sorrowing most of all because he had said that they must not reckon to see his face much longer in this world, but rejoicing because he said: 'It is time for me, if it be His will, to return to my Maker, who formed me when I was not out of nothing. . . .' This and many like things he said, and passed the day in gladness until evening. Then the same boy, named Wilbert, said once more: 'There is still one sentence, dear master, which is not written down;' and he said: 'Well then, write it;' and after a little space the boy said: 'Now it is finished;' and he answered: 'Well, thou hast spoken truth; it is finished. Take my head in thy hands, for it much delights me to sit opposite my holy place where I used to pray, that so sitting I may call upon my Father.' And thus upon

the floor of his cell, singing 'Glory be to God,' he breathed his latest breath."

(*e*) *Wilfrid.*—The life of Wilfrid is mainly important because it illustrates the struggle between Roman and Celtic influence in the Church in the North, which resulted in the final triumph of the Roman form of Christianity.

Wilfrid, born in 634, was the son of a Northumbrian thegn. "At fourteen years of age he chose rather the monastic than the secular life, which, when he had signified to his father, for his mother was dead, he readily consented to his godly wishes and desires and advised him to persist in that wholesome purpose. Whereupon he came to the Isle of Lindisfarne, and there giving himself to the service of the monks he strove diligently to learn and to practise those things which belong to monastic purity and piety, and being of a ready wit he speedily learnt the Psalms and some other books, having not yet received the tonsure, but being in no small measure marked by those virtues of humility and obedience which are more important than the tonsure; for which reason he was justly loved by his elders and his equals." At the age of nineteen Wilfrid had a strong desire to go to Rome, at that time a very unusual step, for English monks travelled very little and there had been hitherto little intercourse between Rome and the North of England.

Encouraged, however, both by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities of the North, he started on his journey in company with Benedict Biscop, already a noted man and some years older than himself, who had given up the position of a royal thegn to become a monk. After spending a year at Canterbury and some months at Lyons, Wilfrid eventually arrived at Rome, where he

spent his time in the study of theology and "of those things appertaining to ecclesiastical discipline which he could not learn in his own country." On his return after some years' absence he was well received by the King Alchfrid of Northumbria, and was made Abbot of the Monastery of Ripon.

His great object now was to replace the Celtic customs of the Church by the Roman. Both customs seem to have been observed in the North, and this had for some time been felt to be a difficulty, but, as long as Aidan lived, respect for him had prevented the question being brought forward. The chief point at issue was the date of keeping Easter, which varied by a week in the two Churches, and it was felt unfitting that the King should be celebrating Easter when the Queen, who was a firm friend of Wilfrid, was hearing the service for Palm Sunday. The Synod of Whitby, 664, was held to decide the question, Colman supporting the Celtic and Wilfrid the Roman customs, and after lengthy discussions Wilfrid was able to win over the King by a powerful argument. "If that Columba of yours was a holy man and powerful in miracles, yet would he not be preferred before the most blessed chief of the Apostles to whom the Lord said: 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' When Wilfrid had ended thus the King said: 'Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord?' He answered: 'It is true, O King!' Then said he: 'Can you show any such power given to your Columba?' Columba answered: 'None.' Then again the King asked: 'Do you both agree in this, without any controversy, that these words were said above all to Peter, and that the keys of heaven

were given to him by our Lord?' They both answered: 'Yes.' Then the King concluded: 'And I also say unto you that he is the doorkeeper and I will not gainsay him, but I desire, as far as I know and am able, in all things to obey his laws, lest haply when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys.' The King having said this, all who were seated there or standing by, both great and small, gave their assent, and renouncing the less perfect custom hastened to conform to that which they had found to be better. Colman gained permission for the Celtic customs still to be observed in Lindisfarne because of the great respect felt by the monks for the memory of Aidan, and then withdrew to Ireland. The decision of the Synod of Whitby was of the utmost significance for the Church of the North, for, though the details on which the discussion turned were, in themselves, unimportant, the closer connection between the Church in the North and the Church of Rome, and the increased intercourse with the Continent, where civilisation was much more advanced than it was in England, had a very marked effect on the English Church.

On the death of the Bishop of Lindisfarne it was decided to transfer the seat of the diocese to York, and Wilfrid was chosen the first Bishop of York. As there were as yet no bishops in the North of England who had been consecrated according to the Roman customs, he went to Gaul for the consecration ceremony, which was carried out at Rheims with great splendour, six bishops carrying him into the church enthroned in a golden chair. On his return he found that the King was again more inclined to favour the Celtic Church, and it was only by the intervention of Theodore, the Archbishop of

Canterbury, that after some time he was able to take up his work as Bishop of York. During the next few years he was in undisputed authority over the Church of the North, and he and his friend, Benedict Biscop, who was at Wearmouth, did a great deal to introduce into the English Church the higher civilisation with which they had been brought in contact on the Continent. Hitherto the churches had been built of wood and thatched with reeds; now the larger churches were built of stone, and as the English were not skilled in working in stone, masons were brought over from Gaul; they were also roofed with lead to secure greater safety against fire, and for the first time glass was brought to England and used for windows. Altar vessels and ecclesiastical vestments—two valuable palls of silk are specially mentioned—were brought over from the Continent, as well as a large number of books. Wilfrid gave to the Church of Ripon a copy of the Gospels written on purple vellum and adorned with paintings, the whole enclosed in a case of pure gold, studded with precious stones; and Biscop brought over pictures illustrating Bible history for the instruction of the people of his district.

Wilfrid at this period enjoyed more power and splendour than any bishop in the North had had before, and many of the sons of nobles were sent to his household to be educated. It is possible that the jealousy of the King was roused, for the King and Archbishop now proposed to split up the bishopric of York, which was of unwieldy size; and Wilfrid resenting this change, about which he had not been consulted, set off on a journey to Rome to appeal to the Pope. On the way he was driven by a storm on the coast of Friesland, where he was well received by the people, who were still heathen, and prepared the way for future missionary work there. In

the spring he continued his journey to Rome, and obtained from the Pope a bull reinstating him in his former position, but on his return to York, found the King and Witan little disposed to obey the authority of a distant Pope or to acknowledge his right to interfere in the affairs of the Northumbrian Kingdom. Wilfrid was even thrown into prison for a time, and when set free was driven into exile.

Undaunted by these reverses, he withdrew to the South of England and devoted himself heart and soul to the work of converting Sussex. Sussex, still cut off from the rest of England by impenetrable forests, was far behind the rest of the country in civilisation, and had not yet become Christian. In earlier days Wilfrid had been driven by a storm on the coast and had been in danger of losing his life through the hostility of the people, and he now returned there to try and win them over to Christianity. Already there was a little settlement of monks in the country, and the King was a Christian; and Wilfrid soon gained the confidence of the people by teaching them to fish by means of nets, and thus helping them to tide over a time of famine. The King gave him land at Selsea with a slave population of 250 persons, whom he freed and baptised, and he then built a monastery there and ruled for five years as the first Bishop of Sussex. After this time he was recalled to the North on the advice of Theodore and reinstated in his bishopric of York. Soon, however, troubles with the King broke out again; once more he was driven out, and now as an old man of seventy, but still with indomitable energy, he undertook another journey to Rome. After the death of the King of Northumbria, who is said at the last to have repented of his treatment of Wilfrid, peace was restored, and

he lived at the Monastery of Ripon until his death in 709.

The activity of the Churchmen of the seventh century was not confined to their own country. Towards the close of the century a stream of missionaries was sent to Germany to carry on the work begun by Wilfrid, the best-known names being those of Willibrord and Winfrith, better known as Boniface. Willibrord went out with a company of twelve monks to work among the heathen in Friesland with the support and encouragement of Pippin, King of the Franks, who had recently conquered that country, and he was afterwards sent to Rome to be consecrated Archbishop of the Frisians. Other missionaries went to the province of the Old Saxons, but were put to death by the people, and in the eighth century Alcuin, an English monk and scholar, entered the service of Charles the Great and helped in the work of reviving education on the Continent.

3. Organisation and Influence of the Church.

(*a*) *Theodore.*—In the Church of the North, though it had decided to accept Roman rule, Celtic influence had predominated in the seventh century; the conversion of the South, on the other hand, had been almost entirely the work of Roman monks. The heathen reaction after the death of Ethelbert had been only a temporary set-back and more monks had soon come over. In 634 Cynegils, the first Christian King of Wessex, was baptised, and it was only in outlying districts that the people were still heathen. The organisation of the Church, as the missionary period was drawing to a close, was the work of Theodore of Tarsus, who was sent over to England as Archbishop of Canterbury in 668, "a man instructed in

secular and Divine writings as also in Greek and Latin, of high character and venerable age, being sixty-six years old." Theodore encouraged learning in the South and started a school at Canterbury, where Greek and Latin were both taught, for Greek was the native language of some of the monks he had brought over with him. This school soon became a rival of the Irish schools, to which many of the English had flocked in search of learning, and one of its most famous students was St. Aldhelm, a member of the royal race of Wessex, who was later Abbot of Malmesbury and Bishop of Sherborne. Theodore was the first archbishop who had ecclesiastical authority over the whole country, and who summoned national Church Councils. For the first time the Churches of the different kingdoms were united, and incidentally this helped to pave the way for the political unity of the country as well. He reorganised the bishoprics, breaking up the larger sees which had hitherto coincided with the kingdoms, and permanently fixed the boundaries of the sees which were henceforth to be independent of political changes. The work of dividing England into parishes has sometimes been attributed to Theodore; but this must have been the result of gradual development rather than the work of one man, for everywhere at this time churches were being built and parish priests were gradually taking the place of itinerant monks. The introduction of the Penitential system is also said to have been due to his influence.

(*b*) *The Influence of the Church.*—It is difficult to over-estimate the effect on the country of the great religious movement of the seventh century; its influence was felt in all classes of society, but most of all, perhaps, in the higher ranks. Everywhere kings and nobles were

giving up rank and worldly honour to adopt the monastic life, and vast tracts of land were given up to endow churches and monasteries. Most important of all was the change in men's mental outlook and moral standards, for the ideal of the monk was now substituted for that of the warrior, and it was possible to gain more honour as a monk than as a soldier.

The influence of the Church left traces in Anglo-Saxon law, for the bishops were often royal advisers. God-parents were placed on an equality with kindred, and could claim wergeld; children were to be baptised within thirty days of birth, and a heavy fine was imposed if a child died unbaptised; Sunday was to be kept sacred, and working on Sunday was prohibited under penalties. The Church did a great deal to discourage slavery, for it taught that the slave had a soul and could no longer be regarded merely as a chattel, and the laws now began to mitigate the hardships of slavery; the poor were also cared for, and almsgiving was insisted on as a religious duty. The Penitential system helped to bring home to every man the sense of individual moral responsibility. Hitherto men had been able to atone for their crimes by paying a fine; the Church taught that wrong-doing was a sin as well as a crime, and in addition to paying the fine due to the State, a man must make his peace with God. A whole system of penances grew up—fasting, going on pilgrimages, abstaining from eating flesh, from warm baths, from attending church, etc. The penitent, we are told, "was to visit the holy places, publicly and constantly confess his sins and implore intercession, and to kiss no one."

The influence of the monasteries was very great. They afforded a refuge from the world, provided for the poor, and gave shelter and hospitality to travellers. It

was mainly in the monasteries that any signs of material progress were to be sought. Manual work was always a feature of monastic life in early days, and the best cultivation was carried on by the monks. By a law of Edgar in the tenth century it was said that every monk was to learn some trade, but they had always been skilled as craftsmen; painting, church embroidery and illuminating were industries carried on exclusively in the monasteries, and almost every improvement in mechanical skill or in the industrial arts was made in connection with the Church.

It was only in the monasteries that it was possible for learning to exist at all. There was a great desire to get more books, and manuscripts were brought over from the Continent by monks, merchants, pilgrims, and by English scholars who had gone abroad to study in Gaul, Rome, or Ireland. Monastic libraries were formed, copies of important manuscripts would be laboriously and carefully made by monks sent from other monasteries, and knowledge thus became more generally diffused. Latin was generally studied by the clergy, and the students at the School of Canterbury, under Theodore, were, we are told, as well versed in Greek and Latin as in their native tongue; on the other hand, a certain number of the clergy must have been ignorant even of Latin, for Bede found it necessary to translate the Latin prayers and services into English for the use of those monks who knew no other language. The study of the classic poets was generally discouraged on the ground that they were pagans; even Bede, though well versed in the classics himself, spoke of the poems of pagan authors as "the husks that the swine do eat."

Intellectual life was stimulated also by the greatly increased intercourse with the Continent. Bishops and

monks were constantly travelling to Rome, and pilgrimages were a very general feature of the time, and were at their height at the beginning of the eighth century, when a constant stream of men and women of all classes left the country to visit Rome and Jerusalem. Two Kings of Wessex in succession gave up their crowns to go on a pilgrimage to Rome, and the second of them, Ine, spent the rest of his life in Rome, and "grew old, clothed in a plebeian habit among beggars." Pilgrimages were undertaken for pure devotion, or as penance for sin, and in the latter case they were generally undertaken barefoot, or in sackcloth or chains, or in some other painful form. Poverty was no bar, for pilgrims were exempt from tolls, and could rely on obtaining hospitality, and at many places there were hostels where they could obtain, free of charge, rest and lodging for three days and nights if they desired it. In any case, however, the journey must have been very toilsome, and in some parts, especially in the passes over the Alps, where they were exposed to the attacks of robber bands, very dangerous. The pilgrims took with them only the barest necessities. Both men and women wore a long robe of coarse cloth, and carried with them only the "scrip"—a pouch or wallet of untanned leather attached to a scarf hanging over the shoulder—and a staff six or seven feet long, with a nail at one end to give assistance in climbing and a knob at the other. A bishop or earl on pilgrimage would sometimes travel with large retinues and a great deal of splendour, and would take with him large sums of money and valuable presents to buy the good-will of the princes through whose lands he passed. The pilgrims did good service in carrying letters and messages, and were sometimes employed as political envoys by princes; they disseminated all sorts of knowledge of

foreign countries, political and social, and were one of the influences that helped to drag the country out of its insular isolation, and to make it realise that it was part of Christendom.

(*c*) *Church and State.*—All through Anglo-Saxon history Church and State were very closely bound up together, and the kings had a good deal more power over the Church than was customary on the Continent, for England being so far from Rome, the Pope was never able to gain much control in the country. Church Councils were held, but only occasionally, and Church matters were generally discussed in the ordinary courts of the land—the witan or the shiremoot—the clergy who sat in these courts had a voice in civil as well as in ecclesiastical matters, and clergy as well as laymen were tried there. Bishops were royal advisers and State officials, and all clergy, unless special exemption was granted them, had to fulfil the ordinary duties of laymen—to serve in the fyrd and help to maintain bridges and fortresses. Laws were issued by the kings regulating the Church as well as the State, though probably in these matters the kings were prompted by the clergy, and it is almost impossible at this time to draw any distinction between civil and ecclesiastical laws. Before the obligation to pay tithes became universal in the tenth century, Church revenues were obtained from offerings and from endowments of land, and the bishops tried to insist on the endowment of every parish church with one hide of land, generally known as glebe land.

4. The Eighth Century.

(*a*) *Alcuin.*—The only great name among English Churchmen of the eighth century is that of Alcuin, and the most important years of his life were spent on the

Continent in the service of Charles the Great. Alcuin was born in the North of England, in 735, and was educated at the Cathedral School of York, which, after the death of Bede, had become the centre of learning for the North and had a library which was second in importance only to that of Rome. For some years Alcuin acted as headmaster of this school. He also travelled a good deal on the Continent, where learning was, at that time, at a very low ebb, and Charles, King of the Franks, who wanted to raise the general level of learning and education in his dominions, asked him to enter his service as master of the school at his palace with general supervision of education in all parts of his Empire. Having obtained permission from the Northumbrian king and the Archbishop of York, Alcuin gave up his work at York and, with the exception of a short visit to England about nine years later, remained on the Continent until his death.

(*b*) *Decline of the Church.*—The religious enthusiasm of the seventh century bore within itself the seeds of decay, and the eighth century was a time of spiritual degeneration.

Bede, in his later years, complained of the decay of spiritual life that had set in. In a letter to Egbert, Archbishop of York, he regrets the neglect of their work by the bishops. The work of a bishop, he said, was to teach, preach, and administer the Sacrament throughout his diocese, and if not able to do this himself he should appoint others and see that it was done. "We have heard it reported that there are many villages and dwellings on inaccessible hills and in deep forests where for many years no bishop has been seen, no bishop has ministered, and yet no single person has been free from the payment of tribute to the bishop. . . . When a

bishop has from love of money taken nominally under his government a larger part of the population than he can by any means visit in his ministration in one whole year, the peril is great for himself and great for those to whom he claims to be overseer while he is unable to oversee them." He also speaks of the decline in monastic life, and notices especially the bad effects of recklessly granting away land to monasteries, with the result that there were no lands left to endow bishoprics, or to provide for soldiers or the sons of nobles, who either left the country or lived in poverty at home, unable to marry. Complaints were made also of the great number of false monasteries which had sprung up. Laymen often fraudulently obtained grants of land exempt from dues on the ground that they wanted to found monasteries and often bribed abbots, bishops, and secular authorities to ratify the grants with their signatures. Bede states that since the death of Aldfrith not a single royal minister had left office without providing himself with one monastery and his wife with another. The layman would then take the tonsure and become abbot, though knowing nothing about monastic rule. With these evils there went naturally a decline in monastic morality. The large numbers of people who poured into the monasteries in the days when religious enthusiasm was at its height tended to the relaxation of monastic discipline, and helped to bring the life of the world into the monastery. In Lindisfarne, for instance, the monks drank nothing stronger than milk and water until King Ceolwulf gave up his crown and withdrew there; but it was sometimes difficult for princes to give up the indulgence of the flesh as well as the power and rank, and he and his followers introduced the use of beer and wine. Luxury and worldliness were beginning to creep

into the monasteries. In earlier days all the necessities of a monk had been supplied by the abbot and were very simple; the rough monk's dress, a handkerchief, knife, needle, steel stylus and tablet to write on, a mat of straw, a bed, a piece of serge, a blanket and pillow, had comprised his whole possessions. In the eighth century monks apparently need give up none of the pleasures or luxuries of the world, and the laws and regulations passed to check laxity of discipline were very numerous but quite ineffective. They were forbidden to hunt, to wear secular dress, to wear their hair long, or to carry arms, and constant and unavailing efforts were made to check drunkenness. Alcuin advised the young monks of Wearmouth to attend less to hunting foxes and hares and more to the study of the Scriptures and the praise of God, and the Council of Cloveshoe, 747, ordered monks to wear sober garments suited to their vocation, and forbade them to allow their houses to be used for "the sportive arts—of poets, harpers, musicians, and buffoons." Decline of monastic rule among the nuns was as marked as among the monks. The use of secular dress seems to have been general, and Bede complained that they spent all their time in weaving fine garments, either to adorn themselves like brides or to gain the friendship of strange men. St. Aldhelm complained that they adopted secular dress entirely with the simple addition of a veil fastened with ribbons to the head, crossing over the chest and falling to the feet behind.

Pilgrimages had fallen into disrepute, and there were complaints that the conduct of pilgrims was a cause of scandal on the Continent. The pilgrimages of women in particular were discouraged as leading to the increase of immorality, and the dissemination of lies by pilgrims was proverbial: "If they went one month on pilgrimage

they spent the next six months in jangling, half tale-bearing, half lying." At the same time the Penitential system as a moral force was rendered useless and even harmful by the widespread custom of performing penances vicariously, especially in the case of fasting, and these vicarious penances were not only allowed but regulated in detail, though with the stipulation that some part of them should be performed by the sinners themselves. We hear, for instance, of such cases as the following: A wealthy thegn committed offences for which one year of fasting was imposed, and by summoning a hundred and twenty of his friends to his aid he was able in three days to work off the whole penance. Penances could be performed in advance, and in another case a wealthy man demanded absolution for recently committed sin as his right, on the ground that he had already earned it by vicarious penances.

From the denunciations of the evils of the time by the Church Councils, it seems that even a relapse into paganism was feared. "You tattoo your bodies like the pagans, who obey the motives of the devil, and you wear your clothes in the same way as the heathen, whom your fathers conquered by the grace of God. . . . We hear, too, that in your disputes you cast lots in pagan fashion, a thing now accounted nothing less than sacrilege, and many of you eat horseflesh (a relic of the worship of Odin), a thing which no Christian among the Orientals does." Brawls in church were so frequent that no one was allowed to enter a church armed, and all weapons had to be deposited in the porch. The letters of Alcuin who was living in a healthier moral atmosphere, teem with complaints of the wickedness in England, both among the clergy and the laity. "Consider the manner of dress, the manner of wearing the hair, the luxuriant

habits of princes and people. Look at the way in which the pagan manner of trimming the beard and cutting the hair is imitated. . . . Look at the immoderate use of clothes beyond any necessity of human nature. This superfluity of princes is the poverty of the people. . . . Where is brotherly love? . . . The satiety of the rich man is the hunger of the poor." It was to this general depravity of morals that Alcuin attributed the disasters of the Danish raids that were just beginning when he wrote.

(*c*) *Offa.*—The overlordship which had been lost by Northumbria after the death of Edwin had in the eighth century passed to Mercia, and under three kings—Ethelbald, Offa, and Cenwulf—Mercia exercised authority over the greater part of England. Of these kings, Offa (757-796) was the greatest. He aimed at building up a strong central kingdom, and succeeded in subduing all the states south of the Humber; Essex and East Anglia were subject to him, and Kent and Wessex had to agree to an alliance, his daughter Eadburga marrying the King of Wessex. He extended his dominions on the side of the Welsh, and took the town of Shrewsbury and the flat country at the foot of the eastern side of the mountains between the Wye and the Severn. This district he colonised with groups of English, and to protect the settlers from raids, built the rampart and ditch from the mouth of the Dee to the mouth of the Wye, generally known as Offa's Dyke, which became the boundary between England and Wales. The Welsh were not driven away from this territory, but remained there as a subject race; the mass of the people there were still Welsh, and laws were made to regulate the intercourse between Welsh and English.

With the idea of making Mercia ecclesiastically inde-

pendent of Kent, Offa gained permission from the Pope to have a separate archbishopric; an archbishop was appointed to the See of Lichfield, but he had no successor, and after his death the question of the archbishopric was quietly dropped. There was already an Archbishop of York, and England at this time seemed likely to fall into the three clearly marked divisions of the North, Centre, and South, and if this threefold ecclesiastical division had been permanent, it would have been an additional barrier in the way of political unity.

Offa was one of the first English kings to make alliances with foreign princes. Charles, King of the Franks, by far the most powerful monarch of Europe, asked for one of Offa's daughters in marriage for his son, but refused indignantly when Offa asked that one of the daughters of Charles should be sent to England to marry a son of Offa, for this was claiming an equality which Charles, even though he was not yet Emperor, refused to acknowledge. The first commercial treaty between an English king and a foreign prince was also made in this reign by Charles and Offa. Charles promised that protection and patronage should be given to English merchants "lawfully according to the ancient custom of trading," and that he would himself see justice done in any case of fraud and oppression, and Offa promised similar advantages to the subjects of Charles in Mercia. Pilgrims were also to be allowed to travel freely through the lands of Charles; "but we have ascertained that merchants seeking gain, not serving religion, have fraudulently joined themselves to bands of pilgrims. If such are found among the pilgrims, they must pay at the proper places the fixed toll."

In 793 Offa visited Rome, and is said to have arranged for the payment of Rome scot—one penny for every

hearth, but it is very uncertain when the tax was first paid.

Offa died in 796, and in the ninth century the supremacy of Mercia was superseded by that of Wessex. Egbert, who had spent his youth as an exile at the court of Charles the Great, became King of Wessex in 800, and during his reign of thirty-six years, gradually brought all the kingdoms of England under his sway. Mercia, completely defeated at the Battle of Ellandun in 828, acknowledged his overlordship, and Northumbria was also subdued, though these provinces still kept their under-kings, and Egbert was only overlord, and not direct king. The Danish invasions, which had already begun, destroyed for a long period the hold of Wessex over the North and Centre of England.

CHAPTER III

THE DANES

1. The Northmen.

In the fourth and fifth centuries the Roman Empire had been overthrown by the pressure of the Teutonic tribes from the East; in the ninth and tenth centuries, when the Teutons had settled down and founded states on the ruins of the Roman Empire and with settlement had become less warlike, they were themselves harassed by the raids of the Scandinavian tribes who had not as yet been brought into contact with civilisation, and who swooped down on the wealthier and weaker people of the surrounding lands, first to gain plunder and later to settle. The cause of their raids is to be found partly in love of adventure, partly in the conditions of their own country. The coast of Norway was not fertile, the land offered little scope to those who wished to gain wealth and power, while it was favourable to the development of a strong and hardy race; still heathen, the people had no respect for the civilisation that was growing up in the countries to the South and West, and looked upon the wealth of the churches and monasteries as their legitimate prey. Every man in Norway was a seaman, and in the summer, after the crops were sown, land-owners, nobles, and even peasants used to go out on plundering raids, returning in the autumn to gather in

the harvest. Seamanship and piracy were an essential part of the education of all men of rank. At the age of twelve the sons of great men would be sent to sea under the charge of some noted viking, and at the age of eighteen or twenty a prince would ask of his father a small fleet completely fitted out. Tradition says that a young leader would often throw a lance or feather into the air and follow the direction to which it pointed in its fall, but wherever he went it was a point of honour not to return without victory and plunder. To maintain his position, to be able to pay and reward his followers and so to be able to retain their good-will and respect, wealth was necessary, and could only be gained in this way; hence it was not ferocity or avarice that was the motive force among the vikings, but the desire to preserve their honour among men, for with them, as with the Teutonic chieftains of earlier days, liberality as a virtue was only second to courage and the "breaking of rings"—the large arm-rings of solid gold, in which payment was made—was always the sequel of any exploit.

The Northmen were not warriors only; they were skilled workers in wood and iron, and had a knowledge of craftsmanship often superior to that of the people they were plundering. They knew how to fit out their ships and provision them for long cruises, and their weapons had not only to be made, but to be kept in good condition and sheltered from sea spray.

As warriors they were certainly better equipped than the Anglo-Saxons; their swords were longer and larger; they used as well, javelins, spears, bows, arrows, and battle-axes; their helmets were of iron and brass, their shields gilt and polished, and men of rank wore coats of mail. The greatest of the vikings did not disdain to

work himself at making the weapons he was to use. "It was the most noble way in which a hero could employ his leisure to polish his shield to the utmost brightness and to represent upon it either some gallant feast or some emblematical figure expressive of his own inclinations and exploits." When a young warrior was first armed he was given a white smooth shield, which he bore unadorned by any symbol until he had by some signal exploit gained the right to have some proof of his valour engraved upon it. The shields of distinguished warriors were sometimes plated over with gold and silver and richly ornamented with sculptured designs. The form of the shield was oval and its height equal to that of the warrior himself; thus, as well as affording protection in battle, the shields could be placed together to form a rampart or tent, and could be used for carrying the wounded or dead from the battle-field.

From very early times the Northmen had been proficient in the art of shipbuilding. Their ships were long and shallow, built more for speed than for strength, and well suited to enter shallow creeks and to penetrate into the land by the river mouths. A ship of average size would be about 74 feet long by 15 feet wide, and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. A boat this size would have 15 benches for rowers, with 2 rowers to each bench, and would contain about three times as many fighting men as rowers. In the Saga of Olaf we hear of long ships with 32 benches and 200 rowers, but most of the vessels were probably much smaller, and in some there seemed to have been no benches at all, and the men rowed standing. Both the stern and the prow stood high out of the water; the prow was generally carved into the shape of some animal, the most common form

being that of a gilded dragon, and the shields were hung round the bulwarks. There was no fixed steering gear, and the ships were moved and steered almost entirely by oars. Though some use was made of sails, little reliance was placed on them, and the vessels were too lightly built to support more than one mast. There was no deep hold or cabin, and tents were carried to shelter the crew, who slept on deck at night when they were unable to land. These ships were well fitted for the comparatively safe navigation of the Baltic and North Sea, but quite unsuited for more distant voyages and for the navigation of the Atlantic; not only were they much too light to be safe in heavy seas, but, as the mariner's compass was unknown, the seamen had to find their way mainly by means of the sun and stars, and in case of fog would be quite at a loss. On long voyages they carried birds, generally ravens, which they would let loose at sea, and then follow the direction they took in the hope of reaching land. In naval engagements they generally lashed the vessels together so as to form almost a continuous surface, with the shields along the sides for protection, and the ships were always provided with means of attack—stones and other missiles, cables and grappling-irons, to seize and board hostile ships. As a rule, however, the vikings preferred to land and fight on foot; they kept close to the shore whenever it was possible, and generally took refuge on land during storms and at night.

Notwithstanding the dangers of navigation in these lightly built ships, very long journeys were often undertaken. England was attacked mainly by the Danes; the Shetlands, the Isle of Man, the east coast of Ireland, the coasts of France, Germany, and Spain were all plundered by the Northmen, who in the latter part

of the ninth century colonised Iceland, and in the tenth century Greenland, while at the beginning of the eleventh century they visited from Greenland the coast of North America—Vineland as they called it. In America no permanent settlement was made, but the colony in Greenland was in existence as late as the fifteenth century. The Swedes went eastward to Russia, where Rurik, in 862, founded a Scandinavian dynasty in the kingdom of Novgorod, and opened up trade with the East through the Russian rivers. In 866 Constantinople was attacked, and in the tenth century the Eastern Emperor took a company of Scandinavians, known as the Varangian Guard, into his pay.

2. Early Plundering Raids in England.

The notice of their first appearance in England is given in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 787: "Here King Beorhtric (of Wessex) took to wife Eadburga, the daughter of Offa, and in his days first came three ships (of Northmen from Hortha-land), and then the reeve rode thereto and would compel them to go to the King's town (Dorchester), because he knew not what they were, and they slew him and all who were with him. These were the first ships of Danish men who sought the land of the English race." They appeared next in the North, where the monasteries, wealthy and defenceless, fell an easy prey . . . In this year (793) dire forewarnings came over the land of Northumbria and pitifully frightened the people; violent whirlwinds and lightnings and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. These tokens mickle hunger soon followed, and a little after that, in this same year . . . the harrying of heathen men pitifully destroyed God's church in Lindis-

farne through rapine and manslaughter" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). Simeon of Durham gives a rather more detailed account of the same event: "The heathen came from the Northern countries to Britain like stinging wasps: roamed about like savage wolves, robbing, biting, killing, not only horses, sheep, and cattle, but also priests, acolytes, monks, and nuns. They went to Lindisfarne Church, destroyed everything in the most miserable manner, and trod the sanctuary with their profane feet, threw down the altars, robbed the treasure of the Church, killed some of the brothers, and carried others away to captivity, mocked many, and flung them away naked, and threw some into the ocean." "Three centuries and a half," wrote Alcuin, "have we and our forefathers been here in this fair Britain, and never before has such a horror fallen on the land as has now come upon us at the hands of the heathen."

After this the raids increased in frequency and violence, and the learning and civilisation of the North were almost stamped out. No organised effort was as yet made to deal with the danger, for there was internal political strife in the North, the efficiency of the fyrd was always difficult to maintain, and it was very slow to collect, and hence the English were able to offer little effective resistance to the invaders. It was especially the greater energy and rapidity of their movements that contributed to the success of the Danes, and as a rule they avoided pitched battles in the open country. Their method was to sail into a harbour or up a river, land at a quiet spot and establish a camp, which they would protect with a palisade and a ditch, and within which they could take refuge, and could defy the attack of any but a large force. Where possible they seized the horses of the district, and, when mounted,

could easily evade the fyrd, which always fought on foot; they then spread over the land, burning, slaying, and plundering, and often returned to their ships, laden with booty, before the English forces were ready to meet them.

Until the middle of the ninth century the Northmen had come for plunder only, and had returned to their own land for the winter months, but about that time they began to settle in the country as well. This change was caused by the policy of Harold Fairhair, King of Norway, who was determined to crush out disorder in Norway, and had bound himself by an oath not to cut his hair until he was master of the whole country. He succeeded finally, but a great many nobles who had given trouble were driven from the land, and became exiles; and it was these men who, with their followers, began to settle in the lands which they had formerly been in the habit of plundering.

3. Settlement in England.

The year 851 is given by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as the date when the Danes first spent the winter in the island of Thanet. "And the same year came 350 ships, the largest fleet yet seen, to the mouth of the Thames, and (the crews) stormed Canterbury and London, and put to flight Berhtwulf, King of the Mercians, with his fyrd, and then fared south over the Thames into Surrey, and there King Ethelwulf and his son Theobald, with the fyrd of the West Saxons, fought against them at Ocklea, and there made the greatest slaughter among the heathen host that we have heard tell of to this present day, and there got the victory."

The chief field of enterprise of the Danes was the North and East of England, and here they first began to make permanent settlements. In 866 "the fleets of the tyrant Hingwar arrived in England from the North and wintered among the East Angles, and having established their arms there they got on their horses and made peace with (*i.e.* subdued) all the inhabitants of their own neighbourhood" (Ethelwerd). The next year they left East Anglia and crossed into Northumbria, where civil dissensions prevented the people making common cause against them When they at length collected an army they were defeated and their king was slain. One army of the Danes now settled in York; the following year the Mercian king was forced to allow another to settle at Nottingham, and in 870 they made a combined attack on East Anglia, destroying on their way the little cluster of monasteries in the fen districts near the Wash. A very full account of these events is given by Ingulph in the history of Croyland Monastery.

In the spring of 870 the Danes, after having spent some time at York, ravaged all the land round the Humber, and about Michaelmas entered the district of Kesteven, in Lincolnshire, spreading fire, desolation, and slaughter on every side. In September an army of the men of the district was collected and defeated the Danes, slaying three kings and pursuing the remnants of their army to their camp. In a few days, however, the Danes were strongly reinforced, the bulk of the English forces melted away, and the rest were almost destroyed in battle. The Danes then advanced against the monasteries, and Croyland Abbey was one of the first to be threatened. Already the news of the defeat of the English and the warning of the approach of the pagan army had been brought by some

refugees. In the face of this danger the Abbot decided that he would remain in the monastery himself with some of the older monks and the children, trusting that as they were unable to make any resistance the Danes would show mercy to them, and he ordered the younger monks to take refuge in a hermitage hidden away among the fens, taking with them the sacred relics of the monastery and as much of the treasure as they could carry. "Accordingly, obeying his commands, with the greatest sadness of heart they loaded a boat with the aforesaid relics and the muniments of the Kings; after which they threw the table of the great altar, covered with plates of gold . . . and ten chalices, together with basins for washing-pots, patens, and other vessels of brass, into the well of the convent. All these, except the table, sank, the end of which, in consequence of its length, always made its appearance projecting above the surface of the water, upon which they drew it out, and as they perceived the fires of the vills in Kesteven approaching nearer and nearer, fearing every moment that the pagans would arrive, left it behind with the Abbot and the aged men before mentioned; and then, embarking in their boat, they reached the wood of Ancarig . . . and remained there . . . for the space of four days, they themselves being thirty in number.

"After this, Abbot Theodore, taking with him two of the aged monks, concealed the said table outside of the Church on the Northern side thereof; but where it was so concealed has never been ascertained up to the present day. Then, putting on their sacred vestments, the Abbot and all the others assembled in the choir and there performed the regular Hours of the Holy Office. . . . The Mass being now finished . . . the pagans bursting into the Church, the venerable Abbot was slain upon the

Holy Altar. . . . His assistants, standing around him, were all beheaded by the barbarians; while the old men and children, on attempting to fly from the Choir, were seized and examined with the most cruel torments, that they might disclose where the treasures of the church were concealed, and afterwards put to death. . . . Brother Turgar, a child ten years of age, remarkable for the beauty of his face and person . . . most earnestly entreated that he too might be put to death; . . . the younger Earl Sidroc, however, being moved with compassion for the child, stripped him of his cowl and, throwing over him a long Danish tunic without sleeves, ordered him everywhere to keep close to him; and in this way, out of all, both old and young, who were left in the monastery, he was the only one saved; for through the favour and protection of the said Earl, during the whole period of his stay, he went in and out among the Danes as though he had been one of them." Unable to find the treasure, the Danes broke open the tombs of the Saints and then set fire to the buildings.

"At last, on the fourth day, with innumerable herds of cattle and beasts of burden, they passed on in the direction of Medeshamstead (Peterborough), where, meeting with the first resistance at the monastery, and finding the gates barred, they attacked the walls with archers and engines on every side. . . . Not a person in the whole monastery was saved. . . . All the altars were undermined . . . a large library of holy books was burned, an immense number of charters of the monastery torn to pieces, the precious relics were trodden under foot, the walls utterly overthrown, and the church itself with all its outbuildings burnt to the ground, the flames continuing to burn incessantly for the next fifteen days.

"On the fourth day after this, having collected an

endless booty throughout the whole of the country, the army assembled together and moved on towards Huntingdon. In crossing the rivers the two Earls Sidroc always moved the last of all for the purpose of protecting the rest of the army. The whole of their forces crossed the River Nene in safety, they, being the last to pass over, by a sudden mishap, lost two chariots laden with immense treasures and various articles of furniture, which fell on the left-hand side of the stone bridge into a very deep part of the river, together with the beasts of burden, which were drowned before they could be rescued.

"While all the retainers of the younger Sidroc were busily engaged in dragging out the said chariots, and anxiously intent upon putting all the booty contained therein into other waggons and vehicles, Brother Turgar made his escape into a neighbouring wood, and after walking all night, at daybreak arrived at Croyland. Here he found his brethren the monks already returned from Ancarig, and using the most vigorous exertions to extinguish the flames that still had the mastery in many parts of the ruins of the monastery. On seeing him return safe and sound they were comforted in some degree; but on hearing from him how their Abbot, as well as the rest of their elders and brethren had been slaughtered . . . they were all of them smitten with intolerable grief and gave way to prolonged tears and lamentations." (The monks lived in poverty among the ruins of the Abbey, which was not built up again until the middle of the tenth century, in the reign of Edmund, by the Chancellor Turkètul, who ended his life as its Abbot. Turgar spent his whole life at the monastery, dying at the advanced age of 115.)

After burning the Convent of Ely the Danes passed into East Anglia, where the King, Edmund, although his

troops had been defeated, was living quietly in a little village, and made no attempt to save his life by flight. As Hingwar, the Danish leader, drew near to the royal residence, he sent a messenger to the King with the demand that he should divide his treasures with him, give up his religion, and pay tribute. Edmund held counsel with one of his bishops who urged compliance, but in vain. "The barbarians are at hand," said the King, "who will try to destroy all that is left of our dear country. Would that by one death the people who are subject to me might escape with their lives. For out of love for a temporal kingdom and for the gain of this present life I will not subject myself to a heathen tyrant when dying like a soldier for my nation and my country I may become a standard-bearer of the kingdom of heaven." Refusing to flee, he sent the messenger back to Hingwar with the reply: "Though with your might you may carry off my treasures and riches, you shall never make me subject to your infidel power." Then he took up arms, and when the Danes arrived met them in battle; but seeing soon that victory was hopeless he refused to fight any further, for he said it was "needful that he alone should die for the people, and that the whole of the nation should not perish." He took refuge in a church, but was dragged out, "bound to cruel thongs . . . to a tree which was at no great distance, and scourged for a long time and mocked in many ways, and, finally, his head was cut off." Hubba and Hingwar, after spending the winter in East Anglia, left the district in the spring, and then the English who must have taken refuge in the inaccessible parts of the fens "came out of their lurking-places," and a chapel was built on the place where the King was martyred. (Account taken from Matthew of Westminster).

4. Alfred.

By the time the Danes had thoroughly subdued the North and Centre, East Anglia and Northumbria, as far as the Tyne, were under their control, and Mercia was tributary to them. They were preparing next to overrun Wessex in the same way, but there resistance was better organised and centred round the figure of Alfred, and though they gained a temporary hold on the country they were soon driven out.

Alfred, son of Ethelwulf, King of Wessex, was born in 849 at Wantage in Berkshire. At the age of five he was sent to Rome "with an honourable escort both of nobles and commoners," and was anointed as King by Leo IV., who adopted him as his spiritual son. We do not know why he was sent, and the ceremony of anointing can have meant little, as his elder brothers all ruled before him. A few years later, in 855, he again visited Rome with his father, spending a year in the city. It was during this visit that Ethelwulf restored the Saxon school, founded by Ine, which had been destroyed by fire, and on the return journey he married Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald, who was then not more than thirteen. Asser gives the following account of Alfred in his childhood: "He was loved by his father and mother and even by all the people, above all his brothers, and he was educated altogether at the court of the King. As he advanced through the years of infancy and youth, his form appeared more comely than that of his brothers; in look, in speech, and in manners he was more graceful than they. His noble nature implanted in him from his cradle a love of wisdom above all things; but, with shame be it spoken, by the unworthy neglect of his parents and nurses, he

remained illiterate even till he was twelve years old or more ; but he listened with serious attention to the Saxon poems which he often heard recited and easily retained them in his docile memory.

"On a certain day, therefore, his mother was showing him and his brother a Saxon book of poetry which she held in her hand and said: 'Whichever of you shall the soonest learn this volume, shall have it for his own.' Stimulated by these words, or rather by the Divine inspiration, and allured by the beautifully illuminated letter at the beginning of the volume, he spoke before all his brothers, who, though his seniors in age, were not so in grace, and answered: 'Will you really give that book to one of us—that is to say, to him who can first understand and repeat it to you?' At this his mother smiled with satisfaction and confirmed what she had before said, upon which the boy took it out of her hand and went to his master to read it, and in due time brought it to his mother and recited it." (There is some doubt as to whether the mother referred to in this passage was his own mother, Osburga, or Judith, but as Judith was only a little older than himself it was probably Osburga, and when it is said that he was illiterate at twelve years old it is possible that only ignorance of Latin was meant.)

The later years of Ethelwulf's reign were disturbed by inroads of the Danes, and in the reign of his son, Ethelred I., the danger steadily increased, for they were preparing to subdue Wessex as they had subdued the North and Centre of England. In these wars Alfred took an important part even before he became King, and it was due to his courage and energy that the important Battle of Ashdown was won. The Danes had taken possession of the high lands whence, under cover of the

short, thick underwood, they could shoot darts at the English when they tried to storm the hill. Alfred arrived early in the morning at the foot of the hill and waited for his brother to give the signal to attack, but Ethelred was in his tent hearing Mass, and refused to leave before the service was over, and, as the need for action was getting urgent, Alfred began fighting on his own responsibility, and "storming like a boar" up the hill drove the Danes back. In that one year as many as eight pitched battles were fought with varying fortune as well as many lesser conflicts, and the courage of the people began to be shaken.

On the death of his brother a few months later, Alfred succeeded to the Crown, but though he was now in supreme control, he met with very little success in war during the next few years. In 876 he had to make a treaty with the Danes, who gave hostages, and, pagans though they were, swore oaths on Christian relics that they would leave the kingdom; but these oaths were soon broken, and towards the end of the summer of 877 one party of them had settled in Exeter, whilst another marched for plunder into Mercia. "The number of that disorderly crew increased every day, so that if 30,000 of them were slain in one battle, others took their place, or double the number. Then King Alfred commanded boats and galleys—that is, long ships—to be built throughout his kingdom, in order to offer battle by sea to the army as they were coming. On board of these he placed seamen, and appointed them to watch the seas. Meanwhile he went himself to Exeter, where the pagans were wintering, and having shut them up within the walls, laid siege to the town. He also gave orders to his sailors to prevent them obtaining any supplies by sea, and his sailors were encountered by a fleet of a hundred

and twenty ships full of armed soldiers, who were coming to help their countrymen" (Asser). In this case they were successful, but the next year was one of disaster. The pagan arm left Exeter and went to Chippenham, a royal villa. "There they wintered, and drove many of the inhabitants of that country beyond the sea by the force of their arms and by want of the necessaries of life. They reduced almost entirely to submission all the people of that country" (Asser). It is rather difficult to account for the complete failure of the English resistance at this time; and whether it was due to internal treachery, or to an unexpected winter attack, is not known.

Alfred himself took refuge in the marshy districts of Somersetshire. When the Danes approached "he was soon lost; he took flight, and left all his warriors and his commanders and all his people, his treasures and his treasure vessels, and preserved his life. He went hiding under hedges and ways, woods and wilds, till through the Divine guidance he came safe to the Isle of Athelney." This place "is surrounded by marshes, so inaccessible that no one can get to it but by a small vessel. It has a great wood of elders, which contain stags and goats, and many animals of that kind. Its solid earth is scarcely two acres in breadth. Alfred, having left the few fellow soldiers that he had, that he might be concealed from his enemies, sought this place alone, where, seeing the hut of an unknown person, he turned to it, asked and received shelter. For some days he remained there as a guest and in poverty, contented with the fewest necessities. But the King, being asked who he was and what he sought in such a desert place, answered that he was one of the King's thegns, had been conquered with him in a battle, and flying from his enemies had reached that

place. The herdsman, believing his words and moved with pity, carefully supplied him with the necessaries of life." It was here that the incident of the cakes related by Asser took place. "He led an unquiet life there, with his cow-herds. It happened that on a certain day the rustic wife of this man prepared to make her bread. The King, sitting then near the hearth, was making ready his bow and arrows, and other war-like instruments, when the ill-tempered woman beheld the loaves burning at the fire. She ran hastily and removed them, scolding the King, and exclaimed: 'You man! you will not turn the bread you see burning, but you will be very glad to eat it when done.' This unlucky woman little thought she was addressing the King, Alfred."

"The King, overwhelmed with the disgrace of poverty and dejection, and instead of his royal palace being confined in such a vile hovel, was one day casually recognised by some of his people, who, being dispersed and flying all around, stopped where he was. An eager desire then arose, both in the King and his knights, to devise a remedy for their fugitive condition. In a few days they constructed a place of defence as well as they could; and here recovering a little of his strength and comforted by the protection of his few friends, he began to move in warfare against his enemies." Asser says that the only land access to their island was by one bridge, on which by great labour they raised two defensive towers; that they lived here for several weeks on what they could get by hunting and fishing, and there Alfred was joined by his wife and family. "His companions were very few in number compared with the barbarous multitude; nor could they on the first day, nor by their first attacks, gain any advantage; yet they neither quitted the foe nor submitted to their defeats; but, supported by the hope

of victory, as their small numbers gradually increased they renewed their efforts, and made one battle but the preparation for another.

"Sometimes conquerors and sometimes conquered, they learned to overcome time by chance, and chance by time. The King, both when he failed and when he was successful, preserved a cheerful countenance, and supported his friends by his example." The account which follows of the Battle of Ethandun, or Eddington, and of the Treaty of Wedmore, is taken from Asser: "In the seventh week after Easter he (Alfred) rode to the stone of Egbert, which is in the eastern part of the wood which is called Selwood. . . . Here he was met by all the neighbouring folk of Somersetshire and Wiltshire and Hampshire, who had not, for fear of the pagans, fled beyond the sea; and when they saw the King alive after such great tribulation, they received him as he deserved, with joy and acclamations, and encamped there for one night. The next morning he removed to Eddington, and there fought bravely and perseveringly against all the army of the pagans, whom, with Divine help, he defeated with great slaughter, and pursued them flying to their fortifications. Immediately he slew all the men, and carried off all the booty that he could find without the fortress, to which he at once laid siege with all his army; and when he had been there fourteen days, the pagans, driven by famine, cold, fear, and last of all by despair, asked for peace, on the condition that they should give the King as many hostages as he pleased, but should receive none of him in return, in which form they had never before made a treaty with anyone. The King, hearing that, took pity upon them, and received such hostages as he chose; after which the pagans swore, moreover, that they would immediately leave the

kingdom ; and their King Guthrum promised to embrace Christianity, and receive baptism at King Alfred's hands. All of which articles he and his men fulfilled as they had promised. For after seven weeks Guthrum, King of the pagans, with thirty men chosen from the army, came to Alfred at a place called Aller, near Athelney, and there King Alfred, receiving him as his son by adoption, raised him up from the holy laver of baptism on the eighth day. . . . After his baptism he remained twelve nights with the King, who, with all his nobles, gave him many fine houses." By the Treaty of Wedmore, or Chippenham, made between Alfred and Guthrum, it was arranged that Alfred should have all the land west and south of a line drawn from Chester to London ; the land of the north and east of this line was known henceforth as Danelagh, the place where the Danish law prevailed. Guthrum was King of East Anglia, and in the north-eastern part of Danish Mercia the five boroughs—Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Stamford, and Lincoln—were strong Danish fortresses.

After the Treaty of Wedmore there was an interval of comparative peace, which was disturbed again in 892 by the incursion of Hasting. Hasting was a noted leader who had ravaged the coasts of North France and had settled in a strong position at Amiens, and when a famine made it impossible for his followers to get food there they turned their attention to the south coast of England. They embarked in their ships with their horses, and with a fleet of 250 vessels appeared off the coast of Kent, and the following year, in 893, another fleet, led by Hasting himself, entered the mouth of the Thames. The Danes already settled in the country were friendly to the new-comers, and in 893 and 894 all the lands round Hampshire and Berkshire were

ravaged. Leaving their ships on the Essex coast, the Danes plundered the small groups along the edge of the forest; Alfred detached groups of soldiers to watch them, and many skirmishes were fought, but, though gaining some success, the English were unable to cut them off from their ships. The only decisive victory gained was the capture of the fortress of Bamfleet by the Londoners when Hasting was away on a plundering expedition. The Danish ships were then broken up or taken to London together with a great deal of spoil, and many Danish women and children were captured. Among these were the wife and the two sons of Hasting, who were sent as prisoners to Alfred, but as they had already been baptised, when at an earlier date they had been hostages in his hands, he sent them back to Hasting with some valuable presents. His generosity seems to have made no appeal to the Danes, and fighting continued. Before the end of the winter of 895 the Danes towed their ships up the Thames, and then up the Lea, and erected a fortress near Hertford, a few miles to the north of London. In the summer Alfred encamped with a powerful army outside London to protect the people at harvest-time and enable them to gather in their crops undisturbed, and one day, as he was riding along the side of the Lea, he discovered a place where the river could be easily diverted from its course, with the result that the Danish ships would be left stranded. This was successfully carried out; the Danes had to abandon their ships and went northward into Shropshire, and while Alfred sent troops in pursuit of them, the Londoners seized their ships, destroying the useless ones and taking the rest to London. The following year Hasting, having obtained some more ships, returned to France, and the last four years of Alfred's reign were peaceful.

In this work of defending the country against the Danes Alfred saw the need of reorganising the fyrd, and, in order that it might be more quickly assembled and better prepared, ordered that only half the men of any district should be called upon to fight at any one time, and the rest were to stay at home and carry on the work of cultivation; the men whose duty it was to fight were always to hold themselves in readiness for action. The landowners were given special military duties, and every thegn—that is, every man who possessed five hides of land—was to send one fully equipped soldier to serve the King.

Alfred realised the importance of fortifications, and towns were encouraged to defend themselves and fortified camps were established at strategic points. He was also the first king to build a fleet, though the value of his naval work has been rather exaggerated. The ships he built "were full nigh twice as long as the others; some had sixty oars, others more. They were both swifter and steadier and higher, too, than the others—and were shaped neither in the Frisian nor the Danish manner, but as it seemed to him that they might be of most avail." They were manned by Frisians, as the English were not now skilled in seamanship.

In the intervals of comparative peace, in spite of constant anxiety from the Danes, who were settled just outside his dominions on all sides and on whose friendship he could place little reliance, and hampered as well by constant ill-health, Alfred carried on a complete work of reconstruction within his own kingdom.

For the government of the people a code of laws was issued. "Some people say that laws are silent amid the clash of arms; nevertheless amid the clang of trumpets and the crash of battle and the rattling of arms he

made laws and delivered them down to be observed by posterity" (Matthew of Westminster).

The object of Alfred in issuing this code was not so much to get new laws as to make a selection from those already in existence, and to modify and add to them; but advance is seen in the greater regard paid to security for person and property, and it is evident that more orderly social conditions were growing up. The principle on which he worked is best explained by the King's own words:

"I, then, Alfred, King, gathered these together and commanded many of those to be written which our forefathers held, those which to me seemed good, and many of those which to me seemed not good I rejected them by the counsel of my Witan, and otherwise commanded them to be holden, for I durst not venture to set down in writing much of my own, for it was unknown to me what of it would please those who should come after us. But those things that I met with, either of the laws of Ine or of Offa, my kinsman, or of Ethelbert, those which seemed to me the rightest I have here gathered together and rejected the others.

"I, then, Alfred, King of the West Saxons, showed these to all my Witan and they then said that it seemed good to them all to be holden."

The administration of justice as well as the laws came under the King's personal supervision. There seems to have been a good deal of ignorance about the law, and probably the ordinary work of the courts had been so disturbed during the years of warfare that it was difficult to get justice properly administered; it was probably for this reason that regular judges were appointed. The King often heard and decided cases in person; a wrong-doer, we are told, never willingly went before him, "for

he knew in the King's presence no part of his wrong would be hidden; and no wonder, for the King was a most acute investigator in passing sentence as he was in all other things, . . . and he also inquired into all cases decided by his judges when he himself was not present."

A great deal of work was done in rebuilding cities, palaces, and monasteries. In 887, after "the burning of the cities and the slaying of the people," he "honourably rebuilt the City of London, and made it again habitable"; and Asser also mentions "other cities and towns which he restored or built, where there had been none before," and speaks "of royal halls and chambers wonderfully erected by his command, with stone or wood; and of the royal villas constructed of stone, removed from their old sites and handsomely rebuilt by the King's command in more fitting places."

The love of the monastic life had almost disappeared during the wars, and in the early part of the reign there was no one "noble and free by birth willing to enter a monastery, except children who could neither choose good nor avoid evil in consequence of their tender years." Alfred encouraged the monastic life and built several monasteries, among others a monastery at Athelney and a convent at Shaftesbury, over which his own daughter, Ethelgiva, was placed as Abbess, and "with her were many other noble ladies bound by the rules of the monastic life." Intercourse with the Continent had almost ceased during the wars. Voluntary offerings were sent to Rome every year by the King, and in 889 it was noted that no pilgrims left the country that year, and the King had to send his letters by special messenger. At a time when the pagans were in possession of London, Alfred had made a vow that after their defeat he would send embassies to the Churches in the far East, so his

messengers went on from Rome and visited, not only Jerusalem, where they were received by the Patriarch, but also Churches in India, and brought home with them valuable presents in the form of perfumes and precious stones, which were long preserved in the churches.

Most important of all, perhaps, were the steps that he took to revive learning in the country, which at his accession was at a very low ebb. "Very few men were then on this side of the Humber (the most improved parts of England) who could understand their daily prayers in English or translate any letter from the Latin. I think there were not many beyond the Humber; there were so few that indeed I cannot recollect one single instance on the south of the Thames when I took the kingdom." The nobles were illiterate almost to a man, as they had not been taught in their youth, and Alfred complained that he was himself ignorant of many things from the same cause. "Of all his troubles and difficulties, that which he affirmed with frequent complaint and the deep lamentations of his heart to have been the greatest, was, that when he had the age, permission, and ability to learn, he could find no masters;" later on he had little time for study, and the means of instruction themselves were destroyed by the Danes. To rectify this state of things he established a school at the palace, where the sons of nobles could be educated, and he even encouraged education among the adult nobles as well. "Wonderful to say, almost all his nobles and prefects and officers, though unlearned from their cradles, were sedulously bent upon acquiring learning, choosing rather laboriously to acquire the knowledge of a new discipline than to resign their functions." To help in his work Alfred invited to his court learned men from different parts of Europe :—Grimbald from France, John from Germany,

Asser, his biographer, from St. David's, are some of the best known of these. "Night and day, whenever he had leisure, he commanded such men as these to read books to him, for he never suffered himself to be without one of them, wherefore he possessed a knowledge of every book, though of himself he could not yet understand anything of books, for he had not yet learned to read anything."

Alfred must have acquired a knowledge of Latin as soon as circumstances made it possible for him to study, for he planned and carried out translations of Latin books into English for the use of the people, that a knowledge of books might be more widely diffused. "Therefore I think it better that we also translate some books, the most necessary for all men to know, into our own language that we all may know them; and we may do this with God's help very easily if we have stillness; so that all the youth that now are in England who are free men and have so much wealth as that they may satisfy themselves, be committed to learning, so that for a time they might apply to no other duty till they first will know to read English writing. Let them further learn the Latin language, they who will further learn and advance to a higher position." The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was first systematically written in this reign, and from this time we have a continuous and reliable history of the country.

Asser also notes the King's skill in mechanical art, in gold and silver work, and in making designs for buildings, and gives an account of his well-known arrangement for marking the time by candles. "After long reflections on these things he at length, by a useful and shrewd invention, commanded the chaplains to supply wax in a sufficient quantity, and he caused it to be

weighed in such a manner that when there was so much of it in the scales as would equal the weight of seventy-two pence, he caused the chaplains to make six candles thereof, each of equal length, so that each candle might have twelve divisions marked longitudinally upon it. By this plan, therefore, those six candles burned for twenty-four hours, a night and day, without fail, before the sacred relics of many of God's elect, which always accompanied him wherever he went; but sometimes when they would not continue burning a whole day and night till the same hour that they were lighted the preceding evening, for through the violence of the wind which blew day and night without intermission through the doors and windows of the churches, the fissures of the divisions, the plankings or the wall or the thin canvas of the tents, they have unavoidably burnt out and finished their course before the appointed time; the King, therefore, considered by what means he might shut out the wind, and so by a useful and cunning invention he ordered a lantern to be beautifully constructed of wood and white ox horn, which, when skilfully planed till it is thin, is no less transparent than a vessel of glass. This lantern, therefore, was wonderfully made of wood and horn as we before said, and by night a candle was put into it which shone as brightly without as within, and was not extinguished by the wind, for the opening of the lantern was also closed up by the King's command by a door beautifully made of horn."

Asser draws a picture of the very varied nature of the King's activities: "In the meantime the King, during the frequent wars and other trammels of this present life, the invasions of the pagans, and his own daily infirmities of body, continued to carry on the government and to exercise hunting in all its branches; to teach his

workers in gold and artificers of all kinds, his falconers, hawkers, and dog-keepers; to build houses, majestic and good beyond all the precedents of his ancestors, by his new mechanical inventions; to recite the Saxon books; and especially to learn by heart the Saxon poems, and to make others learn them; and he alone never desisted from studying most diligently to the best of his ability. He attended the Mass and other daily services of religion; he was frequent in psalm singing and prayer at the hours both of the day and night; he also went to the Church, as we have already said, in the night-time to pray, secretly and unknown to his courtiers; he bestowed alms and largesses on both natives and foreigners of all countries; he was affable and pleasant to all, and curiously eager to investigate things unknown. . . . His bishops, too, and all ecclesiastics, his earls and nobles, ministers and friends, were loved by him with wonderful affection, and their sons, who were bred up in the royal household, were no less dear to him than his own." Alfred died in 901 at the age of fifty-three, and his own words, perhaps, form the best comment on his life and character: "I wished to live honourably while I lived, and after my life to leave to the men who were after me the memory of good works."

CHAPTER IV

THE DANES (*continued*)

1. The Reigns of Edward the Elder and Athelstan.

It had been the work of Alfred to keep Wessex free from Danish inroads; it was the work of his successors—Edward the Elder and Athelstan—to reconquer the Danelagh and force the Danes in England to submit to English rule.

Edward the Elder, the son of Alfred, "a prince inferior to his father in learning and literature, but at the same time even more glorious for power and dignity," ruled from 901 to 925. In his work of conquest he was helped by his sister Ethelfled, who had married Ethelred, the Ealdorman of the Mercians, or rather, of that part of Mercia which had been given to the English by the Treaty of Wedmore. She is described as "a matron of extraordinary wisdom," and after the death of her husband she took over the government of the province herself, gaining the love and respect of the people, and ruling it until her death "in perfect tranquillity." She completed the conquest of Danish Mercia, and subdued the country as far as York, where she died. Edward conquered Essex, the Danish boroughs, and East Anglia; by 921 he ruled as actual King over all the land south of the Humber, and had gained supremacy over the greater part of the North. In 924 the Anglo-

Saxon Chronicle says: "Edward was chosen for father and for lord by the King of the Scots and by the Scots (people), and by King Ragnald and by all the North-umbrians; also by the King of the Strathclyde Welsh, and by all the Strathclyde Welsh."

Athelstan, the son of Edward, succeeded him in 925. As a child he is said to have been a favourite with his grandfather Alfred, who had dedicated him to the life of a soldier at an unusually early age by giving him a scarlet cloak, a belt studded with diamonds, and a Saxon sword with a richly adorned scabbard. Soon after he came to the throne Athelstan had to deal with trouble in the North, where the mixture of races was a cause of unrest, for the Scots north of the Forth, the Welsh of Strathclyde, the Angles of Northumberland, and the Danes of Yorkshire, all looked on the West Saxon king as a foreigner, and a great hostile combination was formed against him, led by Constantine, King of Scotland, Anlaf his son-in-law, King of the Danes settled in Ireland, another Anlaf, also King of the Irish Danes, and the King of Strathclyde. It was when the armies were facing one another that Anlaf came as a spy to the English camp. "Laying aside his royal ensign, and taking a harp in his hand, he proceeded to our King's tent, singing before the entrance, and at times touching the trembling strings in harmonious cadence; he was readily admitted, professing himself to be a minstrel who procured his daily sustenance by such employment. Here he entertained the King and his companions some time by his musical performance, carefully examining everything while engaged in singing. When satiety of eating had put an end to their sensual enjoyments he was ordered to depart, and received the recompense for his song, but disdaining to take it away, he hid

it beneath him in the earth. This circumstance was remarked by a person who had formerly served under him, and immediately related it to Athelstan. The King, blaming him exceedingly for not having detected his enemy as he stood before him, received this answer: 'The same oath which I have lately sworn to you, O King, I formerly made to Anlaf, and had you seen me violate it towards him you might have expected similar perfidy towards yourself'" (William of Malmesbury). He advised the King to remove his tent to another part of the field, and in the night attack that followed the King consequently escaped injury.

The coalition of the North was completely destroyed by the Battle of Brunanburh, 937, celebrated in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle by a long poem, of which some idea may be gained by the following short extracts:—

"This year King Athelstan, lord of earls, ring-giver of warriors and his brother eke, Edmund Atheling, life-long glory in battle won, with edges of swords at Brunanburh. . . . The field streamed with warrior's blood . . . from the rising of the sun . . . God's candle bright—until it sank to its setting. The West Saxon folk the livelong day in mailed bands followed the footsteps of the hostile nations; the Mercians refused not the hard hand play to any of the warriors who with Olaf had come over the waves to seek their death in fight. . . . Five lay on that battle stead, young kings, by swords laid to sleep. So lay seven eke of Olaf's jarls, and of his army countless shipmen and Scots. There was put to flight the Northman's pride; by need constrained to his vessel's prow, he preserved his life on the fallow flood. Also Constantine, the hoary warrior, need not exult, bereft of his kinsmen and friends, and his son left on the battle-field, young in warfare. Needed not boast the grizzly

locked warrior of the bill clashing, the old deceiver. Departed then the Northmen in their mailed barks . . . over the deep water Dublin to seek."

After that battle Athelstan had no more trouble with the North, and his sister, Eadgyth, married Sihtric, King of Northumbria. His reign is also remarkable for the respect in which he was held by foreign sovereigns, and his large family of half-sisters enabled him to form marriage alliances with foreign princes. Eadgive married Charles the Simple, King of France, whose son Louis (Louis Outremer) was, after his father's death, brought up in England. Eadhilda, the youngest, "in whom the whole essence of beauty had centred which the others only possessed in part," married Hugh, Duke of France. The Emperor sent for one to marry his son, Otto, King of the Romans, and two—Edgitha and Elfgive—were sent to Germany under the charge of the Chancellor, Turketul; the former was chosen, and Elfgive married Louis of Aquitaine. The envoys sent to negotiate these alliances brought with them such a vast number of presents that the like had never been seen in England before. Among them are mentioned Oriental spices, costly gems, "coursers bedecked with horse-cloths of gold, most precious vessels of alabaster, and numerous other gifts of most exquisite beauty. A piece of the Cross of Our Lord was sent, most becomingly enclosed in crystal, also a small portion of the crown of thorns . . . the sword of Constantine the Great and a lance of Charlemagne, estimated among the Franks as of no small value" (William of Malmesbury). Athelstan was also on friendly terms with Harold of Norway, who sent him a ship with gold beak and purple sails, furnished with a fence of gilded shields.

With these two kings, Edward the Elder and Athelstan,

the work of conquest was practically over; Athelstan took the proud title of "King of all Britain," and the kings who followed were no longer overlords but direct rulers of the whole country.

2. Dunstan.

In the reigns of the next five kings—Edmund, Edred, Edwy, Edgar, and Edward the Martyr—the most prominent figure in the country was Dunstan, who was the adviser of most of these kings and was the first of a long line of ecclesiastical statesmen.

Dunstan, born at Glastonbury in 825, was the nephew of Aldhelm, Archbishop of Canterbury, and was educated at the monastery of Glastonbury, at that time frequented by many Irish monks and the most noted centre of learning in the West of England. As a boy, Dunstan, though of diminutive size, showed precocious intellectual ability, and devoted himself to study, entering the monastery as soon as he was old enough. He soon gained a reputation, not only as a student but as an artist and craftsman; he was a painter and designer, a musician who could play on the harp, organ, and cymbals, a sculptor and a worker in metals, and two bells made for the church at Abingdon were his work. It was probably this mechanical skill that gained for him the reputation of a conjuror and alchemist, for the common people attributed his knowledge to some supernatural agency. Of this period of his life the tale was told that once when he was visiting the house of a lady to design some tapestry for her, his harp, hung on the wall, was heard playing magic strains by itself, and many other legends were told of his supernatural powers.

Introduced to the court of Athelstan by the Archbishop, he became a favourite with the King, whom he amused

by his artistic skill, but he roused the jealousy of the courtiers, and, expelled from the court on a charge of magic, was followed and attacked by some of the younger nobles, thrown into a pool and half killed. On his recovery he withdrew to Glastonbury and determined to devote himself to the monastic life. In the reign of Edmund (940-946), however, he was again at court, was present at all the councils, and "numbered among the royal chiefs and princes of the palace," but once more he was driven away on the same charge of magic, though there seems to have been some difference of opinion. "Some of his soldiers and dependents, beholding the constancy of his virtuous manner of life, said that he was a good man; others said, 'Nay, but he seduces the people.' On which account some people envied his goodness and prudence and endeavoured to disparage him in the King's eyes, and he, giving a favourable ear to them without well examining the matter, at once ordered him to be deprived of all honour and of his rank as Chancellor, and commanded him to find service elsewhere, wherever he pleased. Next day the King went out hunting to relieve his melancholy, and immediately, as soon as the noise of the hunters blowing their horns and the barking of the hounds resounded in the woods, many stags began their nimble flight. The King selected a hart of wonderful size and pursued it, and at last, after a long and difficult chase, drove it to the precipitous side of a mountain and forced it to throw itself down, and the hounds followed and were dashed to pieces." The King tried to check his horse, but in vain. Thinking death was imminent, he remembered his treatment of Dunstan and promised to make amends if his life were spared. At the extreme edge of the precipice his horse stopped. On returning home he ordered Dunstan to be

brought before him and then they both mounted their horses and rode to Glastonbury. "And when they had arrived there and entered the monastery the King took the right hand of Dunstan and kissed it, and leading him to the Cathedral throne, placed him on it, with the consent of all the monks, and said to him: 'Be thou the most faithful abbot of this seat and of this Church, and if thou findest anything wanting for the complete service of our holy religion I will supply that out of my royal treasure'" (Matthew of Westminster).

Edmund was killed in his palace by Leofa, a robber, whom he had banished; his successor, Edred, also showed favour to Dunstan, making him Bishop of Winchester and entrusting the care of the royal treasures to the Monastery of Glastonbury. Dunstan was supported by both Edmund and Edred in his attempt to restore the Benedictine rule in all its strictness in the monasteries, many of which were at this time in the hands of canons, who were midway between the regular clergy (the monks) and the secular clergy (the parish priests); these canons, who were often married, Dunstan wanted to replace by monks, but the reform roused a good deal of opposition among both clergy and laity.

Edwy (955-959) was the only one of this line of kings who was hostile to Dunstan. The tale that Edwy, having withdrawn from the coarse festivities of his coronation day to the comparative privacy of his chamber, was dragged back to the hall by Dunstan and reproached with behaving in a way unworthy of a king, is generally given as a cause for this, but he was certainly a supporter of the secular clergy, and as long as he reigned Dunstan lived in exile in Gaul. Edwy, however, proved an unsatisfactory sovereign, and was soon deposed by some of his subjects in favour of his brother Edgar, generally

known as Edgar the Peaceable, who recalled Dunstan, and made him Bishop of London, and a little later Archbishop of Canterbury. He was now able to continue his work of reform, and under his influence the King, in 969, ordered the bishops to expel the secular clergy from all the greater monasteries and cathedral churches and to elect monks in their places. Many of the monasteries destroyed by the Danes, or fallen into decay during the wars, were restored by Edgar, who gives the following account of his work in the charter granted by him to the Monastery of Malmesbury: "A spirit of piety sent from above to cherish my feelings of zealous devotion has suddenly suggested to my watchful zeal to restore all the holy monasteries in my kingdom which, pulled down visibly to the very timbers thereof, as though through the ravages of men and the rottenness of the wood, have become, a thing of still greater importance, almost empty within and deserted by the worship of God. For expelling the illiterate clerks who were subject to no rules of religious discipline, in many places I have appointed pastors of a more holy grade, that is to say, persons wearing the monastic habit; and for the purpose of repairing the ruins of the churches I have by means of donations from my treasury supplied them with abundant means for the payment of their expenses."

During this period the work of political reorganisation was also going on, and in this, too, Dunstan took a prominent part. It is impossible to determine how much was due to him and how much to the kings, but he was certainly the foremost man in the royal council, and he gave as a reason for his reluctance to accept the bishopric of Winchester in the reign of Edmund, the fact that he would not be able to attend the meetings so regularly. The great work of the period was the

settlement of the North. Edmund still had some difficulty with the Danes. In 945 "he harried over all Cumberland and gave it all up to Malcolm, King of the Scots, on condition that he should be his co-operator by sea and land." Edred reduced Northumbria, and the Northern Witan swore fealty, but the pledges were soon broken, and on a renewal of disturbance he threw Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, who was at the head of the Danish resistance, into prison.

Edgar was more powerful than any king had been yet, and the chroniclers illustrate this by the tale that he was rowed on the River Dee by six or eight under-kings.

"In the same year King Edgar the Peaceful, coming to the City of Caerleon, received an oath of fealty from eight of his tributary kings . . . and the next day, embarking on board ship with them, the tributary kings were all placed at the oars and he himself took the helm, and steering the vessel skilfully along the course of the river to the admiration of many, while all his nobles followed him in a similar boat, he sailed from the Palace as far as the Monastery of John the Baptist, where, after he had finished Divine service, he returned back to the Palace with the same pomp; but as he re-entered the Palace he is reported to have said to his nobles that now at last all his successors might boast that they were kings of England, since he had enjoyed a procession of such honour and triumph in the obedience of so many kings" (Matthew of Westminster).

One of his most important acts was the grant of Lothian (the land between the Tweed and the Forth) to the King of the Scots and his successors, "on condition that each year on the principal festivals when the King and his successors carried their crowns through

the streets, they should come to the court and celebrate the festival with joy with the other princes of the kingdom. Moreover, the King gave him many mansions on the road in order that he and his successors when coming to the festival might be able to lodge comfortably . . . and these they kept until the reign of Henry II." (Matthew of Westminster). The importance of this cession lay in the facts that the boundary between England and Scotland on the east was fixed as it is at present and that Edinburgh became the Scotch capital; Scotch kings now ruled over Angles and became more civilised, and were brought into more peaceful relations with England. The North was now quiet, the Danes in England were allowed to keep their own laws and customs, trade was encouraged, and an era of peace and prosperity seemed about to begin.

After the death of Edgar, however, and the accession of Edward the Martyr, who allowed the government to fall into the hands of his stepmother, Elfrida, there was a change for the worse. Monks were expelled from the churches and the secular clergy brought back, with their wives, and at the Synod of Calne (978), held to discuss the question and attended by all the great men of the kingdom, the policy of Dunstan was violently attacked. But the meeting was brought to a close by the sudden collapse of the building where it was being held, and here "all the chief witan of the Angle race fell . . . from an upper floor, except the holy Archbishop, Dunstan, who alone was stayed up on a beam, and some there were sorely maimed, and some did not escape with life" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). This incident, ascribed at the time to Divine intervention on behalf of Dunstan, has been by some attributed to his ingenuity; but there is little ground for supposing the accident to be pre-

meditated, for the mechanical knowledge of the time would hardly have been able to contrive it, and the absence of solidity in much of the building of the age is quite sufficient to account for it. Whatever temporary advantage Dunstan may have gained from it, it is evident that it was impossible for him to carry on or maintain the work of reform without the support of a strong sovereign, and all the good effects of this period of reform and organisation were soon to be lost in the renewed flood of Danish invasions.

3. Ethelred the Unready (979-1016).

A few years after his accession Edward the Martyr was slain by his mother Elfrida, in order that her own son, Ethelred, might be placed on the throne. General indignation was roused: "To the Anglo-Saxon race was no worse deed done than this was since they first sought Britain," but there is no record of any punishment being meted out to Elfrida.

Matthew of Westminster gives the following account of his death: "When one day King Edward was fatigued with hunting and oppressed exceedingly with thirst, so that he only wanted for something to drink, while his comrades and servants had followed the hounds wherever chance led them, having heard that his stepmother and his brother were dwelling in a town which is called Cornesgate (Corfe in Dorsetshire), he put spurs to his horse and hastened thither, suspecting no wickedness, because of his own innocence, but judging the hearts of others by the well-regulated disposition of his own breast. But his stepmother caressed him, when he came, with soft words, and so persuaded him to listen to her; and when, after having given him a kiss, she offered him a

cup, one of her officers stabbed him with a dagger while he was eagerly drinking it. But the King, when he felt that he was mortally wounded, began to urge his horse on with the spur so as to enable him to return to his friends, while the blood was running from him in streams, which gave his servants who were seeking him intimation of his death."

Ethelred, described by the chronicler as "a most excellent youth, of handsome figure, beautiful countenance, and lofty bodily stature," now succeeded at the age of ten. The tale is told of him that "when he heard people cry out that his brother Edward was slain, he by his weeping so irritated his furious mother, that, because she had no whip at hand, she took up a torch and beat the innocent boy with that. . . . On which account he for the future so abhorred torches the whole of his life that he never allowed their light to be borne before him." From the early years of his reign troubles began. Dunstan, with whose policy Ethelred had no sympathy, died in 988, and shortly after the Danish invasions were renewed.

The object of the Danish invasions now was conquest, and not merely plunder and settlement. The leaders who had plundered England in Alfred's reign were the last examples of a type of adventurer that was even then beginning to pass away. Denmark and Norway had recently been reduced to order and brought under the rule of strong kings, and it was no longer by outlaw chieftains and their bands of followers that England was attacked, but by powerful sovereigns, who had strong armies and navies and all the military resources of well-organised kingdoms to fall back on. England, on the other hand, was weak and disunited. The powerful Ealdormen who had replaced the petty kings of earlier

times could not yet be relied upon to act as loyal subjects of the West Saxon King and work together for the general good; moreover, many of the nobles of the North and Centre were of Danish descent, and were more disposed to join the invaders than to attempt the apparently hopeless task of trying to organise resistance with an inefficient Government at the head. The chronicles of the reign are a dismal record of invasion, disaster, treachery, and incapacity.

In 991 the Danes won the hardly fought Battle of Maldon, and the following year Ethelred adopted the fatal policy of paying them tribute, thus "procuring for a time by means of money that peace which he could not procure by arms" (Matthew of Westminster). This policy was not bad in itself, and might have been useful if vigorous steps had been taken to defend the country against the Danes in the future, but Ethelred could make no use of the breathing-space thus gained, and the country was as little prepared as before to meet them when they returned. Another incident in the early years of the reign was the treachery of Aelfric, who, when appointed leader of the English fleet, gave warning to the Danes of the attack which had been planned, joined them with his ships, and enabled them to escape. Ethelred revenged himself by putting out the eyes of his son; but a little later Aelfric was pardoned and again placed at the head of the forces, a position which he again betrayed. In 994 Sweyn of Denmark and Anlaf of Norway came to London with ninety-four vessels and attacked the city, but were beaten off by the citizens. "There they sustained more harm than ever they imagined any townsman could do unto them. And they fared hence and wrought the most evil that ever any host might do in burning and harrying and man slaying,

both by the sea coast among the Anglo-Saxons and in Kent land, and among the South Saxons and in Hampshire. And at last they took to themselves horses and rode as far as they would and were doing unspeakable evil. Then the King and his witan decreed that they should be sent to, and promised tribute and provisions on condition that they should cease from harrying; and that they accepted. And the whole host came to Southampton and there took up their winter quarters; and there they were fed from all the kingdom of the West Saxons, and they were paid £16,000. Then the King sent Bishop Aelfheah and Alderman Ethelward after King Anlaf; and hostages were delivered the while to the ships, and then they led Anlaf with great honour to the King at Andover. And the King Ethelred received him at the Bishop's hands and royally gifted him, and then Anlaf promised him, as he also fulfilled, that never again would he come with strife to the English race" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle).

War did not cease, for many of the Danish soldiers remained, and when they had eaten Wessex bare they went farther to the west, and we hear of them in the following years in Dorset, in the Isle of Wight, and at the mouth of the Thames, the English becoming more dispirited as time went on. In 1002 Ethelred made one of the greatest mistakes of his reign—the massacre of St. Brice—and sent secret orders to the shires commanding all the Danes in England, both recent invaders and those already settled in the country, to be put to death on a certain date. The number of the slain is not known, but the massacre must have been very general; in London men were murdered even at the altars of the churches, where they had fled for refuge, and among the victims was Gunhild, the sister of Sweyn. Among those

who escaped were "some young men of the Danish nation" who "fled to a ship and went to Denmark, and relating the cruel destruction of their race to King Sweyn, moved him to tears." Summoning the chief men of his kingdom, he prepared to take his revenge, and for the next four years he swept over the country, "lighting his war beacons as he went," whilst "all England groaned like a bed of reeds shaken by the agitation of the west wind" (Matthew of Westminster). A severe famine, "such that no man ever before remembered one so grim," added to the sufferings of the people, and "those whom the war had spared perished from want. Meanwhile the enemy overran the country with such freedom that they would carry off their booty through a space of fifty miles without fearing any resistance from the inhabitants" (William of Malmesbury).

At length "the dread of the host was so great that no man could think or devise how they could be driven out of the land or how this land held against them, for every shire in Wessex they had sadly marked by burning and by harrying. . . . Then the King and his witan decreed for the behoof of the whole people, though it was hateful to them all, that they needs must pay tribute to the host. Then the King sent to the host and bade it be made known to them that he would that a truce should be made between them and that tribute and food should be given them. And all that they accepted, and then were they provisioned from throughout the whole English nation" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle).

Sweyn withdrew after this, but many of the Danes remained and the country gained no respite. Both on sea and on land the English were equally unsuccessful. Over and over again we are told that the ships were prepared, but they were never used to any purpose. On

one occasion when they were ready "they delayed from day to day and distressed the poor folk who lay in the ships; and ever as it should have been forwarder, so was it later from one time to another; and ever they let their enemies' forces increase, and ever they retired from the sea, and they always fared forth too late. And then at the end the naval expedition availed nothing save the folk's distress and a waste of money and the emboldening of their foes." Later on in the reign, in 1009, when a fleet had been collected at Sandwich, its effect was neutralised by quarrels among the nobles, and when some of the ships were in pursuit of a traitor, Wulfnoth, "came such a wind against them as no man before remembered; and it utterly dashed and beat to pieces the ships. When this was known to the other ships where the King was, then was it as if all counsel were at an end; and the King fared home and the Aldermen and the chief councillors, and thus lightly forsook the ships. And then the folk who were in the ships brought them to London; and they let the whole people's toil thus lightly perish" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle).

The army was even less effective than the fleet; for the fyrd was always slow in assembling and, unless under good leadership, dilatory in action, and if the season was getting on the men did not want to leave their homes before the crops were gathered in; meanwhile the Danes were overrunning the country and carrying the booty off to their ships. The fyrd was seldom ready when and where it was wanted. "And when they (the Danes) dispersed to their ships, then ought the fyrd to have gone out to oppose them if they should land; but the fyrd fared home. And when they were eastward then was the fyrd held westwards; and when

they were southwards then was our fyrd northwards. Then were all the Witan summoned to the King, and they were to counsel how the land might be defended. But although something was then resolved it did not stand even one month; at last there was no chief who would gather a fyrd, but each fled as he best might; nor at the last would even one shire assist another." Tribute was frequently paid, but not at the right time; "but when they had done the most evil, then truce and peace were made with them. And nevertheless for all this truce and peace and tribute, they fared everywhere in troops and harried our wretched folk and captured and slew them." As William of Malmesbury said, "more attention was paid to private quarrels than to public emergencies, and if they were united in a plan someone was sure to betray it."

The year 1012 was marked by the martyrdom of Alfheah, later known as St. Alphege, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"And in this year they besieged Canterbury and got into it through treachery, because Aelmaer betrayed it, whose life the Archbishop Alfheah had before saved. And there they took the Archbishop Alfheah and Alfward, the King's reeve and Abbess Leofwine and Bishop Godwin. And they let Abbot Aelmaer go away. And they took therein all the ecclesiastics and men and women; it is not to be told to any man how many of the folk there were and afterwards they were in the town as long as they would. And when they had thoroughly ransacked the town they went to their ships and led the Archbishop with them." For many weeks he was kept a prisoner, and it was not until Easter that his steady refusal to allow ransom to be paid for him led to his death. "Then on the Saturday (after Easter Sunday)

was the host greatly excited against the English Bishop because he would not promise them any money, but forbade that anything should be given for his ransom. They had also drunk deeply, for wine had been brought there from the South. Then they took the Bishop, led him to their husting on the Sunday eve, the octaves of Easter, and there they shamefully (killed him); they pelted him with bones and heads of cattle, and then one of them struck him with an axe iron on the head so that he sank down beneath the blow; and his holy blood fell on the earth, and his holy soul he sent forth to God's kingdom" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle).

The following year saw the complete subjection of the whole country by Sweyn. In the late summer he sailed with his fleet round East Anglia into the Humber and up the Trent as far as Gainsborough, and leaving the fleet in the charge of his son, Cnut, began to ravage the land. All the people of the North and Centre submitted, giving hostages and taking oaths of fealty, and when he began to lay waste the South, Oxford and Winchester and most of the southern towns, with the exception of London, submitted. Then followed an attack on London, which was defended by Ethelred and the citizens, and Sweyn, unable to take the city, withdrew to Wallingford and then to Bath, "raging with the fury of a dog and destroying everything that came in his way." At Bath he received the submission of the West, and for the first time took the title of King of England. Ethelred remained in London "torpid with inactivity, timid and suspicious, not daring to trust himself to anyone. He did not dare to assemble an army or to lead it against the enemy, fearing lest the nobles of the kingdom, whom he had unjustly deprived of their inheritance, might abandon him in

the field and give him up to the enemy to be put to death. . . ." At last the King, worn out with all these troubles, withdrew secretly from the City of London, and sailed first to Southampton and then to the Isle of Wight. He had married Emma, a Norman princess, and now turned to Normandy for refuge. He first sent over the Queen and her children under the charge of Eadric with a guard of 250 soldiers, and, when he heard that she had been well received by Duke Richard, followed her.

Submission to Sweyn seems to have brought little relief to the people, for we are told he carried off the treasure and plunder of the people and nobles to his ships and demanded hostages in addition; but the following year he died and the Witan sent to Ethelred asking him to return, declaring "that no lord was dearer to them than their own natural lord if he would rule them more according to law than he did before. . . . Then sent the King his son Edmund hither with his messengers and bade him greet all his people and said that he would be to them a gracious lord. . . . And then they confirmed full friendship with word and with pledge on both sides, and declared every Danish king outlawed from England."

England, however, was not to be gained without fighting, and when Ethelred prepared to return he "sent word to all men who would take fee thereto, to wit, for conquering the land with him. Then drifted to him a great multitude of folk; and withal thither came to his aid King Olaf with a great following of Northmen." London, which was still held by the Danes, was the chief point of attack, and the Heimskringla Saga gives a detailed account of the capture of Southwark Bridge by the Northmen. "On the other side of the river there

is a great cheaping-town called Southwark; there the Danes had great arrayal; they had dug great dykes, on the inner side whereof they had built a wall of wood and stone, and there within they had a great host. King Ethelred let make a hard onset, but the Danes warded them and King Ethelred might do nought against them. A bridge was there across the river, betwixt the river and Southwark, so broad that waggons might be driven past each other thereover. On the bridge were made strongholds, both castles and bulwarks looking down stream, so high that they reached a man above his waist; but under the bridge were pales stuck into the bottom of the river, and when an onset was made the host stood on the bridge all along it and warded it. King Ethelred was mickle mind-sick how he was to win the bridge. He called together for a parley all the captains of the host seeking counsel of them how they should bring the bridge down. Then King Olaf said he would risk laying his men on to it, if other captains were willing to set on also. At this meeting it was settled that they should lay their host up under the bridge. Then each one set about arraying his men and ships.

"King Olaf had great flake hurdles made of willow twigs and green wood and let sheds of wicker-work be taken to pieces, and all these he let lay over his ships so widely that they went right out board. There under he let set staves so thick together and so high that it was both handy to fight from under, and it was full stout enough against stones if they were cast down thereon. Now when the host was arrayed they fell on rowing up the river; and when they came near to the bridges there was cast down on them both shot and stones so great that nought might hold, neither helms nor shields; and the ships themselves were wondrous broken thereby,

and many withal backed out. But King Olaf and the host of the Northmen rowed right up under the bridge, and lashed cables round the pales that upheld the bridge and then they fell to their oars and rowed all the ships down stream as hard as they might. The pales dragged along the ground even until they were loosened under the bridge. But inasmuch as a host under weapons stood thickly arrayed on the bridge, there were on it both a many stones and many war weapons, and the pales having broken from under it the bridge broke down by reason thereof, and many of the folk fell into the river, but all the rest thereof fled from the bridge, some into the City, some into Southwark. And after this they made an onset on Southwark and won it. And when the townsfolk saw that the River Thames was won, so that they might not hinder the ships from faring up into the land, they were afeard and gave up the town and took King Ethelred in."

Ethelred ruled until his death in 1016, when he was succeeded by his son, Edmund Ironside; but Cnut, the son of Sweyn, was trying to get power in England, and warfare broke out again. A series of battles was followed by the Treaty of Olney, which divided the kingdom between them, giving the North to Cnut and the South to Edmund; but after the death of Edmund, in 1017, Cnut succeeded in making himself King over the whole country.

4. Cnut.

Cnut's first act on becoming sole King of England was to secure his throne by driving out all other claimants. The sons of Edmund Ironside, sent to Sweden to be put to death, were sent thence to Hungary, and Alfred and Edward, the sons of Ethelred and Emma of Normandy,

were brought up at the Norman court. England was now divided into four great earldoms: Wessex Cnut kept himself at first, though it was afterwards given to Godwin, Mercia was given to Eadric, East Anglia to Thorkill, and Northumbria to Eric.

One of the early incidents of the reign was the death of Eadric. Eadric Strona had made himself notorious by his constant treachery; he is described by Matthew of Westminster as "a wicked man, the lowest of the people, the disgrace of the English, double-tongued, cunning, a betrayer of secrets, skilful in dissembling, prompt at feigning"; he had gained the favour of Ethelred because of his wealth only, and had been one of the most unreliable of his supporters, always kindling war, when he had been sent to mediate a peace. He had been as faithless to Edmund Ironside as he had been to his father. Cnut had given him the earldom of Mercia, but at the Christmas festival a quarrel arose between them, and Eadric taunted Cnut with the help he had given him. "It was for you," he said, "I deserted Edmund, and from fidelity to you I afterwards destroyed him." "Then you deserve death for treason against God and against me, for having slain your rightful sovereign and my sworn brother," was the reply, and summoning one of his jarls Cnut had the traitor slain, on the spot.

A good deal of Cnut's time and attention was taken up by the affairs of his Scandinavian lands, and in the wars fought in the North the English took part. In 1028 he left England with fifty English ships, drove out Olaf, and took possession of the kingdom of Norway; later on he gained Sweden as well, but having secured his position there he returned to England, where he spent the greater part of his time.

During his reign England enjoyed a period of quiet, which it much needed. In 1018 a last great tribute was taken to pay off the host: "Altogether £270,000, besides that which the townsmen in London paid (which was) ten and a half thousand pounds. And then a part of the host fared to Denmark, and forty ships remained with King Cnut." With the withdrawal of the greater part of the Danish fleet and army the English were freed from the burden of the Danegeld, and it was possible for prosperity to begin. Though Cnut was a Dane his rule in England was more like that of a native king than a foreign conqueror. The people were ruled by English laws, and the laws issued by Cnut were the old English laws with some additions made in the direction of developing police organisation and local government on English lines, and equal rights were given to English and Danes. He encouraged the Church, "repaired throughout England the monasteries which had been injured or destroyed by the raids of himself and his father, and built churches on many of the spots at which battles had been fought, most especially at Assandun, . . . and appointed ministers to them, who, through the succeeding revolutions of ages, might pray to God for the souls of the persons there slain." He also built a church on the spot where St. Edmund of East Anglia had been slain, and had the body of St. Alphege taken from London to Canterbury. "Thus, anxious to atone for the offences of himself and his predecessors, perhaps he wiped away the foul stain of his former crimes with God; certainly he did so with man" (William of Malmesbury). "He decorated the old monastery of the City of Winchester with so much munificence that the gold and silver and splendour of the jewels terrified the minds of the strangers who beheld it, and the King did this at the exhortation of Emma,

his Queen (the widow of Ethelred, whom he had married), who exhausted his treasures by her prodigal liberality in such matters" (Matthew of Westminster).

In 1031 Cnut went on a pilgrimage to Rome, being the first English king who had undertaken that journey since Ethelwulf, the father of Alfred. Matthew of Westminster says: "He went with great honour and offered vast gifts of gold and silver and silken cloth and precious stones to St. Peter. . . . He got exemption of the English school from tribute . . . and received magnificent gifts from the Emperor." He complained to the Pope of the great sums extorted from the Archbishops when they went to Rome to obtain the pallium, and obtained some redress. In the letter that he wrote from Rome he mentioned the trading rights which he had gained for his subjects by negotiation with the Emperor: "That my subjects, traders, as well as those who went on a religious account, should peaceably go and return from Rome without any molestation from warders of barriers or tax gatherers." He also gave directions that the government should be justly carried on at home: "Be it known, then, that since I have vowed to God himself henceforward to reform my life in all things, and justly and piously to govern the Kingdom and the people subject to me, and to maintain equal justice in all things; and have determined, through God's assistance, to rectify anything hitherto unjustly done, either through the intemperance of my youth or through negligence; therefore I call to witness and command my counsellors, to whom I have entrusted the councils of the Kingdom, that they by no means, either through fear of myself, or favour to any powerful person, suffer henceforth any injustice, or cause such to be done in all my Kingdom. Moreover, I command all sheriffs or governors through

my whole Kingdom, as they tender my affection or their own safety, not to commit injustice towards any man, rich or poor, but to allow all, noble or ignoble, alike to enjoy impartial law, from which they are never to deviate, either on account of royal favour, the person of any powerful man, or for the sake of amassing money for myself, for I have no need to accumulate money by unjust exaction."

The following version of the tale of Cnut and the waves is taken from Matthew of Westminster :

"As he was flourishing and magnificent in his Kingdom which he acquired by his bravery, he one day ordered his royal chair to be placed by the seashore, and then mounting, he sat down in it, and said in a threatening voice : 'You are under my dominion, O sea, and the land on which I sit is mine, nor is there anyone in it who can dare with impunity to resist my authority. I now command you not to come upon my land, nor to presume to wet my royal vestments.' But as wave after wave rose up, and disregarded his injunctions, the sea without any respect wetted the feet and legs of the King, and then the King, not leaping from his chair till he was almost too late, said : 'Let all the inhabitants of the world know that the power of Kings is vain and frivolous, and that no one is worthy of the name of King, except Him in obedience to whose nod the heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them are subject to eternal laws.' And from that time forth the King never wore his crown, but he always placed it on the head of the image of his Crucified Master, and so gave a great example of humility to all future Kings."

The reign of Cnut (1017-1035) was followed by the short troubled period of the rule of his sons, Harold and Harthacnut, elected by the Danes and the citizens of

London, who, we are told, "from long intercourse with these barbarians had almost entirely adopted their customs." Harthacnut exacted money from the people with great harshness, and plundered the citizens of London, and on his death Edward the Confessor, the only surviving son of Ethelred and Emma, was called to the throne by the Witan.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND DOMESTIC LIFE

1. Central and Local Government.

(*a*) *King and Witan.*—The development of kingship in England was a result of the conquest. As the Teutons settled down, the more powerful chieftains took the title of King, and, as the smaller kingdoms were merged in the larger ones, the petty Kings sank down to the position of ealdormen. With the extension of their dominions, the Kings of the larger states gained power and importance; but they always ruled with the help of the Witenagemot, or Council of Wise Men, and neither before nor after the union of the kingdoms did they exercise absolute authority. The Witan, composed of bishops, nobles, and royal thegns, had the right to choose, and, if necessary, to depose, the King, and, though it generally chose a member of the royal family, and more often than not the eldest son of the late king, it was not bound to do so. It was with the advice and consent of the Witan that the King made laws, granted away land by charter (bōc land), and imposed danegeld on the people, but the relative powers of King and Witan were never clearly defined, and a King of strong character could generally get the Witan to carry out his wishes.

The King derived his revenue mainly from land, and

the royal lands, later known as the demesne lands, were scattered about in every shire. From each of these estates or manors he had the right to claim *fcorm fultum* —*i.e.*, maintenance for himself and his court for a certain number of days in the year. Contributions of corn, meat, honey, dairy produce, etc., were paid by the tenants on these lands when the King needed them, or were stored up until his arrival. The Kings were thus constantly moving about from manor to manor, and seldom spent more than a few days, or a few weeks at most, in any one place. On most of these estates, or, at any rate, in certain centres, there was a house where the King could lodge, but it was generally only a bare hall, and the greater part of the palace furniture, the hangings, vessels, valuables, household utensils, etc., had to be carried from place to place.

The King had also certain rights over the folk land—*i.e.*, the land that was neither demesne land nor bôc land; he had the right to the profits of justice—*i.e.*, to a share of the fines paid in the Hundred and Shire Courts; he had also the right to take tolls on trade, and the right to demand from all landowners the Trinoda Necessitas—service in the fyrd, and help in the maintenance of bridges and fortresses. When land was granted away, the royal rights over it were often granted away as well; but, except in the case of a few churches and monasteries, land was never freed from the burden of the Trinoda Necessitas.

As time went on greater importance was attached to the office of King. From early times the life of the King had been considered specially valuable and, in addition to the high wergeld paid to his kindred if he were slain, another fine, the cynebôt, was paid to compensate the people for the loss of their ruler. The

Church, though it gave no servile devotion to a bad King, taught that obedience to the King was a religious duty and the consecration of the King on his accession was a religious ceremony. When the Kings ruled over the whole country they began to be regarded as lords of the land as well as rulers over the people. The King was looked up to as the source of justice, and, if justice could not be gained in the ordinary courts, people began to think that an appeal lay to the King himself; the peace, formerly the Folkpeace, began to be looked upon as the King's Peace, and there was a special penalty for disturbing the peace within three miles of the residence of the court.

(*b*) *The Local Government.*—The central government in Anglo-Saxon times was never very strong, and seldom came into very direct touch with the people. It was through the local government that the greater part of the work of the country was carried on, and the organisation of the Hundred and Shire Courts for purposes of administration, justice, and police belongs to the period following the Danish invasions, when the Kings were trying to get order in the country, and the need was felt for some system more definite and tangible than the tribal customs of earlier days.

The Hundred was of very ancient origin, and corresponded to the Pagus of Tacitus. The meaning of the term, which has been much disputed, is sometimes explained as the land of a hundred families, or, what was practically the same thing, the land that sent a hundred warriors to the host, but, whatever it may have been originally, in historic times it appears as a group of villages, and was the smallest division for justice and police. The Hundred Court is first mentioned in the laws of Edgar, when it was ordered to

be held once a month. It was to be attended by the lords of land or their stewards, and by the reeve, the priest, and the four best men of each township; it was presided over by a great landowner of the district or by the Hundred Reeve appointed by the King.

Shires were formed in various ways. In some cases, as in Devon and Somerset, the shire was the old sub-kingdom of Heptarchic times; in others, as in Kent, Sussex, and Essex, the smaller kingdoms became shires. In some districts it was found necessary to divide the larger kingdoms into shires for administrative purposes, and in this case it was usual to take some important town as a centre, the town giving its name to the artificially formed shire, as in the case of Nottingham and Derby. The division of the country into shires has been ascribed by the chroniclers to Alfred, but probably this was only because the system became universal at the beginning of the tenth century, when the country was settling down after the Danish invasions. The Shire Court was, in the shires that had been formed from ancient kingdoms, the descendant of the old tribal folkmoot. In all the shires it was attended, as was the Hundred Court, by the chief landowners or their stewards, and by the reeve, priest, and four men from each township. It was held twice a year, and was presided over by the Sheriff, Ealdormen, and Bishop, representing respectively the King, the Nation, and the Church.

The work of the Hundred and Shire Courts was very similar, but all important matters came before the Shire. The courts were held in the open air, and in theory all power lay with the suitors—*i.e.*, with the people who formed the body of the court, and nothing could be done without their consent; in practice, however, as inequalities

of wealth and rank increased, power tended to fall more and more into the hands of the officials.

The work of the courts was mainly judicial and administrative, and in any case that came before them they could "declare folk-right"—*i.e.*, they could state authoritatively what the existing law or custom was.

As time went on the ties of kindred were becoming weaker. Responsibility for crime was now falling on the individual rather than on the group of kindred, and a law of Edgar made the payment of the wergeld voluntary on their part, allowing them as an alternative to give the offender up to justice, and to avoid responsibility by refusing him food and shelter. To put an end to family feuds, which still persisted in spite of the institution of the wergeld, it was said that the kinsmen of the slain man were to take vengeance upon no one but the slayer himself, and that his kinsmen were not to be involved.

As a result of these changes it was necessary to find some other means of securing that justice should be done and the peace maintained, and the principle followed in the laws of Athelstan, Edgar, and Cnut was that every man should be provided with some surety who should be responsible for him, should produce him in the courts of law if necessary, and be answerable for him if he were not forthcoming. In the towns, gilds which were associations for mutual help were beginning to be formed, and by a law of Alfred, the "gegildas," or the members of the gild, in the absence of the kindred were to pay half the wergeld if one of their members committed manslaughter, and to receive half the wergeld if one of their members were slain. We only hear of the frithbohr, the arrangement of men in groups of ten for mutual responsibility from the Norman law of Frankpledge, but

the system must have been in existence in Anglo-Saxon times.

When a man was brought up for justice the trial took place at the Hundred Court, and there was no appeal to the Shire unless he had thrice been refused justice at the Hundred. Compurgation and ordeal were the methods used to determine guilt or innocence. By compurgation a man cleared himself from suspicion by the oaths of his companions, and if he could bring twelve men to swear that he was of good character he was considered innocent. The value of a man's oath varied with his rank, and the oath of a priest or thegn was worth that of six ceorls, while the oath of a bishop or ealdorman was worth twice as much as that of the priest or thegn.

If the accused could not bring forward friends who would swear for him he had to go to ordeal, which generally took the form of boiling water or hot iron. In the former case he had to plunge his hand, or, if the charge was sufficiently grave, his arm up to the elbow in boiling water; in the latter he had to carry a bar of hot iron for a certain number of paces or to walk over hot iron. As the ordeal was an appeal to the judgment of God, it was in a sense a religious ceremony and generally took place in church. No man was allowed to enter the church after the fire was lighted by which the ordeal was to be heated except the priest and the accused. When the ordeal was ready witnesses were admitted to certify that the water was really boiling, or the iron sufficiently hot; a certain number of men then entered the church and stood along the walls on both sides of the ordeal, and after the priest had sprinkled them with holy water they kissed the Gospels and made the sign of the Cross. Then followed the ordeal, and afterwards the wound was bound up and was not looked at

for three days; if, after that time, its appearance was healthy—it was not necessary for it to be entirely healed—the man was held to be innocent. Other forms of the ordeal were the cold-water ordeal and the corsned. By the former the accused was thrown into water and was considered innocent if he sank and guilty if he floated, for floating was a sign that the water refused to receive him; a rope was attached to him, but it sometimes happened that people were drowned while proving their innocence. In the case of the corsned the accused, after making a declaration of innocence, had to swallow a piece of bread, which it was thought would choke him if he were guilty.

The punishment for nearly all offences was a fine or bot, but there were a few crimes, such as arson, homicide within church walls, and murder, or secret and premeditated slaying, which were botless and punishable only by death. Compurgation was never a very satisfactory system, because it gave so much opportunity for false swearing; this was recognised by law, for when a man of notoriously bad character found compurgators to swear for him and so avoided the ordeal, though he could not be found guilty, he could be banished and ordered to leave the realm within forty days.

The duty of maintaining the peace had, from the earliest times, fallen upon the people themselves. By a law of Edgar it was ordered that if a theft had been committed and the thief escaped, the hue and cry was to be raised, all the men of the Hundred were to join in the pursuit, and if he escaped into another Hundred the hue and cry was to be raised there as well. Any man who held back from the pursuit was fined, and a fine was imposed as well on any Hundred from which the thief managed to escape after the hue and cry had been raised.

2. The Growth of Feudal Tendencies.

The great change that was taking place in political and social life in Anglo-Saxon times was the gradual development of feudal tendencies, and the greater importance that was being attached to the possession of land. This is seen especially in the development of a landed aristocracy, who soon began to exercise a quasi-feudal authority over the tenants on their estates. The nobility of birth of early days had been superseded by a nobility of service and a nobility of landowners, for the royal thegns rose in importance as the power of the Kings increased, and before long received large grants of land as a reward for the services they had rendered. No conditions were attached to these grants as in later feudal times, but all men who held land were subject to the Trinoda Necessitas, and the thegns would not be exempt from this. As time went on the great landowners began to take a position of much greater social and political importance; on the one hand, they gained more rights and privileges and could exercise more authority over their tenants; and on the other, they had more duties to perform. Greater military responsibilities were thrown on them, for every landowner with five hides of land had to provide one fully equipped soldier to serve the King; they had also greater responsibilities in the maintenance of the peace, for every lord was responsible for his own tenants, and by a law of Edgar it was said that every landless man was to place himself under a lord. Anyone who had a charge to bring against a tenant or dependant must first demand justice of his lord, who could only free himself from responsibility by handing the offender over to justice. The lord gained some advantage from this system, for, if one of his men were slain, in addition to

the wergeld still paid to the kindred, another payment, the man-bot, was paid to the lord.

When the King granted away land to a thegn or monastery he generally granted away at the same time most of his rights over the land. The most important of these were Feorm-Fultum, and Sac and Soc. The Feorm (right to maintenance), even for one night, would generally be of considerable value; a day's Feorm, for instance, granted to the monks of Canterbury from an estate, included forty sesters of ale, sixty loaves, a wether, two cheeses, four fowls, etc. The monks did not travel round to the different estates, as the King had generally done, but had the supplies sent to them; the right to collect them often led to interference in the affairs of the village on the estate, and sometimes labour services were substituted for them. This change was going on in Wessex as early as the seventh century, and a law of Ine forbade the exaction of payment in addition to labour dues unless the peasant was provided with a house. A grant of Sac and Soc gave the right to take, over a certain district, the profits of justice, which had formerly gone to the King, and were now often diverted to a thegn or monastery. The land over which a lord was granted Sac and Soc did not always belong to him; he might have the grant of land without rights of Sac and Soc, or rights of Sac and Soc without the land, or both might be granted together. When Sac and Soc was granted, justice was done at the Hundred Court exactly in the same way as before, the only change being the presence of the lord's steward, who was there to look after the financial interests of his master; but a village that had to pay the profits of justice to a lord generally began to look upon him as a master, the court began to be considered as the court of the lord, and in some

cases it became the Halimot, and was held in the lord's hall.

The land granted away by the King to a thegn was often more than he could cultivate himself, and it was understood that he should put a sufficient number of tenants on the land to cultivate it, or at least to cultivate a certain proportion. Hence the thegns began in their turn to grant land away, sometimes making hereditary grants, but more often grants of laen land, which reverted to the lord at the death of the tenant.

Thus an entirely different meaning was now given to the term "thegn"; originally a servant and a member of the warband of the King or great noble, the thegn was now a landowner as well, but the use of the term was still kept up for the King's officials and personal attendants, and the idea of service was never dropped. By the law of Alfred any man who held five hides of land had the rank of thegn, had "thriven to thegn right," and had the thegn's wergeld of 1,200s., and the same privilege was enjoyed by every man who had taken three voyages in his own ship.

In later Anglo-Saxon times the position of the independent ceorls was getting worse, their numbers were diminishing, and there was a great increase in the class of dependent cultivators who worked on the land of a lord. The ceorls had become impoverished during the Danish period, not only by the constant disturbance caused by war, but by the heavy contributions imposed on them, both by the Danes and by the King for the payment of Danegeld. The normal holding was now much less than a hide, and the small landowner, finding himself unequal to the burden imposed by the Trinoda Necessitas, often found it advisable to surrender his land to a lord; after this, though he would still live on the

land, he no longer owned it, and he had to do some service for the lord, in return for which he enjoyed protection. One of the results of the large grants of land made by the Kings was that a great many villages were now on the land of a lord, and the villagers were consequently the tenants of the lord, and had to work for him in return for the right to live on the land. Thus at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period the bulk of the peasant population were in a position of dependence on the landowners, but they were still in a sense freemen, their wergeld was still 200s., whether they were free or dependent, a dependent village still sent representatives to the Hundred and Shire Courts, the dependent cultivator still had the right to sue in the courts, and could bring an action against anyone but his lord, and he still had to pay Rome Scot or Peter's Pence. It was his economic position rather than his political position which had been altered, though the two were certainly very closely connected, and one was very liable to affect the other.

An estate belonging to a lord cultivated by the lord's tenants, with a village community in villenage on it, and paying gafol or Danegeld to the King, was in later times known as a manor, and more than a century before the Norman Conquest took place, a good deal of the land was already covered with manors.

The manor was divided into inland and outland. The inland was the land which the lord kept for his own use, and which was generally known later as his demesne. This included the land on which the lord's house stood, his share in the common pasture and meadow, and his strips in the common fields; and it was cultivated partly by the tenants and partly by his slaves, or theows. The outland, which generally had to bear the brunt of taxation, included the lands of the tenants and the manorial

village, which was still very like the village of early Anglo-Saxon times, except that the villagers had to perform services for the lord as well as cultivating their own lands, and they were becoming bound to the soil, though they were still freemen except as regards their relations to the lord.

The chief classes of tenants were the geneats, geburs, and cotsetle, or cottagers.

The geneat had his own homestead or farm, which he stocked himself; he had to pay land gafol, and his wergeld was 200s. He had to do occasional agricultural work for the lord, but the chief services demanded of him were riding and carrying services, "to go on errands far and near whithersoever he is directed." He might also be expected to give general help in making park palings, building the lord's mansion and enclosing it with a wall, making new roads, etc.

The normal holding of the gebur was the yardland of thirty acres, and house, tools, and stock (two oxen, one cow, six sheep, and seven acres sown with corn) were provided for him by the lord, and reverted to the lord at his death. The services demanded of him varied a great deal in different districts. On some estates he had to give two days' work a week "when he must do anything that is commanded him," and three days' work at harvest and in springtime; he had to plough three acres and sow them with his own seed for the lord's benefit, and he had to pay gafol (dues) at different times of the year—10d. at Michaelmas, and at other times barley, hens, honey, etc., and he had to pay one young sheep or 2d. at Easter. The gebur must also have had a horse and pigs, for he sometimes had to lend his horse to the lord instead of doing service himself, and he had to give two loaves to the swineherd when he drove his herds to the

mast. As he was responsible for the payment of hearth-penny to Rome, he must still have been regarded as personally free.

The cotsetl, or cottager, had only five acres, and as a rule paid no land gafol (dues). He worked for the lord on Monday throughout the year, and three days in the week at harvest. It is not likely that the cotsetl possessed oxen, and we do not know how he cultivated his lands, but he probably worked as a labourer for the wealthier tenants, who may have lent him their ploughs and oxen in return. He, too, had to pay his hearth-penny on Holy Thursday, "as it behoves every freeman to do," and also Church Scot at Martinmass, and had to help in the lord's hunting.

There were manorial plough teams as well as the teams of the tenants, and a good deal of the farmwork on the lords' inland was done by his theows, who were not freemen. In an account of agricultural work written in the tenth century, the work of a ploughman, who was evidently in the position of a theow, is described: "I go out at daybreak urging the oxen to the field, and yoke them to the plough. It is not yet so stark winter that I dare keep close at home for fear of my lord, but the oxen being yoked . . . I ought to plough every day one entire field or more. I have a boy to threaten the oxen with a goad, who is now hoarse through cold and bawling. I ought, also, to fill the binns of the oxen with hay and water. . . . It is a great labour, because I am not free." Sometimes the lord freed his theow, and giving him land and stock, placed him in the position of a gebur, but though then personally free, he was still subject to the lord, as he was still his tenant. Manumission was rather frequent, and the ceremony is described by a law of William I. The lord produced the slave in the Shire

Court, and delivered him to the sheriff by the right hand, and then proclaimed him free of all yoke of servitude; he then showed him roads and doors, and delivered to him the arms of a freeman—viz., a lance and sword—and permitted him to depart where he would. The slave gave the lord thirty pence as the price of his skin.

There were a great many miscellaneous services that had to be performed on the manor—such as carting, repairing of hedges and dykes, sheep washing and shearing, care of vineyards, etc., in which the tenants had to take their share, and men had to be appointed to act as shepherd, cowherd, swineherd, etc. The duties of the shepherd and cowherd are described in an old English dialogue. The shepherd says: "In the first part of the morning I drive my sheep to the pasture and stand over them, in heat and in cold, with dogs lest the wolves destroy them. I lead them back to their folds and milk them twice a day, and I move their folds and make cheese and butter. . . . I am faithful to my Lord." The cowherd says: "When the ploughmen separate the oxen I lead them to the meadows; all night I stand watching over them on account of thieves, and again in the morning I take them to the plough well fed and watered."

The officers on the manor were the Reeve, the headman of the village, who was often chosen by the villagers and who had to see that the work of the villages was properly performed, and the Bailiff, who had general supervision over the manor and looked after the interests of the lord.

3. The Military System.

The military system had changed a good deal during the Anglo-Saxon period. The liability of all freemen to serve in the fyrd had never entirely disappeared,

but it had become modified as the increasing impoverishment of the bulk of the freemen made it more difficult to enforce. The fyrd had always been slow to collect and difficult to maintain in a condition of efficiency, and the Danish wars had shown the urgent need in time of danger of a professional military class. Alfred's laws—that only half the men of a district should be liable to serve at one time, and that every five hides of land should equip a soldier—have already been mentioned, and the later kings had a bodyguard, known as the house-carls, on which they relied far more than on the fyrd.

The fortifications of Anglo-Saxon times were very simple, seldom consisting of anything more elaborate than earthen ramparts, and when defeated in battle the people were generally more inclined to take shelter in the forests and inaccessible fen districts, as Alfred had done. Almost the only instance of anything corresponding to the modern idea of a fortress was that of Bamborough, but even Bamborough owed its strength mainly to its inaccessible site; all older authorities speak of it as a town, and there is no evidence of a castle there before the reign of William II., yet it was so strong that Penda could not storm it in 633, and could only destroy it by heaping up wood on the most accessible side and setting fire to the stockade. The term "borough," which is very frequently used, meant first only a surrounding wall, generally of earth, for protection, and later was used as well for the place protected by the wall. Some sort of wall must, in early times, have surrounded every village and every house of any importance. The hall of the thegn and the adjacent buildings were enclosed by a stockade or "burh," the gates of which were closed at night, and the building and repairing of the "burh" of the lord

was one of the duties of his tenants. The fortresses built by Alfred and his successors were probably only palaces and towns surrounded by walls, and the entry in the Chronicle to the effect that Ethelfleda "built a borough at Worcester to shelter all the folk" must be explained in the same way. The work of building the "burh" and keeping it in repair was one part of the Trinoda Necessitas and was binding on all freemen, for as the stronghold was to be a refuge for the villagers in times of danger it was only fair that the repair of the walls should be a common charge on the villages of the district. As late as the reign of Edward the Confessor one man had to be sent up from every hide in Cheshire to help repair the walls of Chester. In order to ensure the work being done the people of the neighbourhood who were responsible often found it convenient to have houses in the borough and to let people live in them on condition that they performed this duty.

The weapons of the Anglo-Saxons were the sword, the wooden spear 6 feet long, the broad, leaf-shaped dagger about 15 inches long, the javelin, and the light battle-axe, and they may have had bows and arrows, but probably used them for hunting rather than for war. The sword, the usual weapon of the noble, was long, broad and double-edged, and the hilt was often ornamented with gold and jewels. For defence every man carried a convex wooden shield, round or oval, covered with leather and with an iron boss in the centre. Helmets were worn by the nobles and were often richly ornamented; the ordinary soldiers wore caps of skin with the fur outside. Little defensive armour was worn as yet, and though the byrnie, or tunic of mail, is mentioned, it was not made of the later chain-mail, but of pieces of iron or rings sewn on a leathern or quilted

tunic, or else of strong wires closely interwoven. It was worn only by the nobles, and the ordinary soldiers had no defence beyond their shields. All fought on foot, though the nobles sometimes rode on horseback to the place of battle.

Knighthood was already regarded as a military honour, but the conferring of knighthood, until Norman times, was still a religious ceremony. "It was the English custom that he who was about to be lawfully consecrated a Knight should, the evening before, confess, and after absolution spend the night in the Church, giving himself up to prayer, devotion, and mortification. On the following day he should hear the Mass and make offering of a sword upon the altar. After the Gospel the priest would bless the sword, and with his blessing, lay it upon the neck of the Knight, on which, after having communicated at the same Mass on the sacred mysteries of Christ, he became a lawful Knight" (Ingulph).

4. Productions and Industry.

(*a*) *The Food-Supply.*—All through this period agriculture was the chief industry of the country, and the work of producing the food-supply still absorbed the energies of the greater part of the population. Food of a simple nature seems on the whole to have been fairly plentiful, but there was always a liability of local famine, for there was practically no trade in food; each district was dependent on its own supply, and a bad season would always mean a time of scarcity. Wheat and barley were the crops in most general use, though rye and oats were also grown; wheaten bread was used by the wealthy, and bread made from various kinds of grains, often mixed together, was the staple food of the poor. The meal was ground in earlier days by the hand-mill, or

stone quern, by female slaves and by the peasant women; in later Anglo-Saxon times water-mills were used. The bread, made without yeast, was baked in small flat cakes. There was not a great variety of vegetables and fruits. Beans, kale, leeks, herbs of various sorts were grown on most homesteads, and pears, apples, nuts, and cherries, which had been introduced by the Romans, were very plentiful. Meat was fairly plentiful, but it was probably the food of the wealthy rather than of the poor. Oxen, sheep, goats, deer, pigs, and, in earlier days, horses, were all used for food; but fresh meat could as a rule only be obtained in the summer, for, as it was difficult to provide fodder to keep animals alive through the winter, those that would be required for food were killed and salted in the autumn. Game of all sorts abounded in the woods, and the work of the fowler was of considerable importance; in the Saxon Dialogue he says: "In many ways I trick the birds—sometimes with nets, with gins, with tune, with whistling, with a hawk, with traps." Even the larger birds, such as herons and cranes, were used for food, as well as waterfowl and the birds of the woods. Dairy-farming and the keeping of bees were industries carried on in every village and probably in most homesteads; poultry, eggs, cheese and butter were all plentiful; honey was used almost exclusively as a substitute for sugar for sweetening purposes, and the wax was used for candles. Spices, frankincense, cinnamon, pepper, etc., were imported in small quantities, and were very valuable.

Fish was a very important article of diet, and large quantities were consumed, especially in the monasteries during the periods of fasts prescribed by the Church. As so much of the land was still marsh and fen land, eels were very plentiful, and in some districts rents to a

monastery were paid in eels. On the whole, fresh-water fish, caught in the rivers and ponds, was used more than salt-water fish, partly because of the danger of fishing in the open sea, partly because the transport of fish, as of other goods, was slow and difficult, and all fish that could not be consumed in the district where it was caught would have to be dried or salted, which was an additional expense. The flesh of the whale and porpoise, which are too strong for modern taste, were then considered luxuries. In the Saxon Dialogue the fisher, who gained his living by his craft, gives the following account of his work: "I go on board my boat and cast my net into the river, and cast my angle and baits, and what they catch I take. The citizens buy my fish. I cannot catch as many as I could sell. Eels and pike, minnows and eel-pout, trout and lampreys." When he fishes in the sea, which he does but seldom, "for it is a great row for me to the sea," he catches "herrings and lax (salmon), porpoises and sturgeon, oysters and crabs, mussels, periwinkles, sea cockles, plaice and fluke, and lobsters, and many of the like. It is a perilous thing to catch a whale. It is pleasanter for me to go to the river with my boats than to go with many boats whale-hunting."

The production of salt was a very important industry, as so much of the food had to be salted, and in twenty-seven counties there were no fewer than 727 salt works which paid rent to the lords of the district.

The drinks of the people were milk and butter-milk, ale made generally from barley—no hops were used until the fifteenth century—and mead made from honey. Vineyards had been introduced by the Romans, but the climate was not hot enough to be very suitable for the cultivation of grapes, and the wine made from them was

rather sour. Some wine was imported, but it was only used by the wealthy, and was considered a luxury.

(*b*) *Industry.*—Industries made little advance in Anglo-Saxon times, and where there was progress in industrial skill it was generally the result of foreign influence. Bede mentions copper, iron, lead, and silver as being found in the country, but there was very little mining after Roman times until a much later period. Some iron was obtained from the West, and lead, found in Derbyshire, was rather extensively used to cover the roofs of large buildings, as it gave more security against fire than wood or thatch. The Teutons had been skilled in working in iron from the earliest times. In Beowulf iron bands and clasps "cunningly forged" are mentioned, and the warriors did not think it beneath their dignity to fashion their own swords and shields.

The work of the goldsmith was also held in high repute. The making of personal ornaments—rings, bracelets, clasps—and of vessels and cups for the table, which if not made of gold were often covered with gold, must have been a widely diffused industry, for it was customary for kings and great nobles to make valuable presents in this form to their servants and followers, and to take presents to foreign princes when they went abroad. Ethelwulf, the father of Alfred, took with him to Rome as presents a crown of purest gold weighing four pounds, two basins of the purest gold, a sword bound with gold, two small gold images, four dishes of silver gilt, two palls of silk with golden clasps, and silk robes with golden clasps, as well as a quantity of gold and silver coin to be distributed among the people. Precious stones were also used to enhance the beauty and value of the goldsmith's work. "A rich and skilful goldworker, wishing to do some admirable

work, collects wherever he can, remarkable and precious stones to be placed among the gold and silver, as well to show his skill as for the beauty of the work. These precious stones are chiefly of a ruddy or aerial colour."

The work of making pottery and household utensils, of preparing leather, and making coarse cloth for garments must have been carried on in nearly every village by the villagers themselves; but there were already cloth weavers who made a finer cloth established in a few districts, and the work of dyeing cloth was carried on. Bede mentions the great abundance of cockles, from which scarlet dye was made—"a most beautiful colour, which never fades with the heat of the sun or the washing of rain, but the older it is the more beautiful it becomes." Madder was also imported from St. Denys for dyeing cloth.

The knowledge of making enamel was brought from the East, but it was known in Western Europe at this time, and the Jewel of Alfred was probably of English workmanship. Though it is doubtful whether any glass was made in England at this time, it was used both for church windows and for drinking vessels, and colourless glass imported from the Continent was very likely painted in England, but it was very little used all through this period.

It was in the monasteries that the industrial arts chiefly centred. By a law of Edgar every monk had to learn a trade, and work for the Church afforded scope for all forms of talent. The founding of bells for the churches, the making of vessels for the altars, carving in wood and other materials, were all as much a part of the work of the monastery as the writing and copying of books and the illumination of manuscripts. The work in which the English monasteries and convents

excelled was embroidery, which was known far and wide on the Continent as "English work," and foreigners came to England to learn the art from English workers. Gold and silver thread, floss silk, twisted silk, and jewels were the materials used, and the embroidery was worked on coarse linen, and then transferred to the garment or vestment it was to adorn, and surrounded with a rim of gold or silver thread. A cope sent from England to the Bishop of Benevento in the time of Cnut was far superior in workmanship to anything produced in Italy, and at the time of Anselm was still the most beautiful vestment worn by the bishops who were meeting in Council at this town.

(*c*) *Trade.*—Trade was only gradually developed, and there was never very much during this period. Internal trade was at first carried on entirely by itinerant chapmen and at markets, and to prevent fraud all bargaining had to be transacted in public and before witnesses. By a law of Ine the chapman was directed to traffic before witnesses, and by a law of Alfred any men that a chapman wished to take with him to help him in his work were to be presented first to the King's reeve at the folkmoot, "and let it be stated how many there are, and let him take such men with him as they may be able afterwards to present for justice at the folkmoot." Markets were used for the exchange of village produce, and were generally held in towns. To prevent fraud and secure the payment of the tolls, the laws insisted that all trade should be done within the town: "Let no men bargain out of port, but let him have the witness of the port reeve or of some other truthful man who can be trusted" (Edward the Elder). "No cattle shall be bought and sold except within cities, and that before three faithful witnesses." We have little definite know-

ledge of the tolls exacted from people bringing things to market. In the regulations for the port of Billingsgate in the reign of Ethelred II., it was said that five eggs were to be taken from a basket of eggs, one chicken from a basket of poultry, and a penny twice a year from women who dealt in butter and cheese.

There was a certain amount of foreign trade carried on before the Danish period with the South of Europe, and afterwards with the Scandinavian countries as well. English merchants frequented the fairs of Rouen and of other foreign towns, and brought home foreign produce: "Skeins of silk, costly gems, gold, garments, pigments, wine, ivory, copper, tin, silver, glass, and such like" (Saxon Dialogue). England exported wool, horses, hunting dogs, which were famous all over the Continent, and woollen garments, for complaints were made to Offa by Charles the Great that the woollen cloaks exported from Mercia were not of full length. The slave trade was very important, and slaves were exported to Ireland as well as to the Continent. The attempts to restrict the trade made by the Church, which forbade the selling of Christian slaves into heathen lands, and by the State, which forbade Englishmen to be sent across the sea, were ineffectual; and Emma, the wife of Ethelred and Cnut, is reported to have made large profits by buying up slaves in England and selling them in Denmark. The close connection with the Scandinavian countries did a good deal to increase trade: fish, skins, and furs were brought from the North of Europe, and through trade with the Danes England could gain some of the Eastern produce which the Northmen brought to Europe by means of their trade routes across Russia to the Caspian and Black Seas. The law of Alfred, which declared that every captain who had undertaken three voyages in his

own ship was to be held to have "thriven to thegn right," shows that the status of merchants was rising.

There were already foreign merchants in England, and foreign ships were allowed to enter English ports though tolls were generally exacted. The penalties for evading the tolls were heavy. At Chester, for instance, a toll of fourpence per load was taken, and the fine for evasion of the toll was forty shillings for every man carried on the ship. Most foreigners who came to England had to sell their goods on board their ships, generally taking wool in exchange, but as early as the eighth century there were Frisian merchants in London and York, and a little later Icelanders at Chester, trading in furs. In the reign of Ethelred the Unready there were "Men of the Emperor" in London, merchants from the Netherlands were allowed to travel freely over the country, and merchants from Ireland came to Cambridge to trade in cloth.

London during this time was not of much importance from a military or political standpoint, but it was from very early times an important trading town. In London there was the earliest foreign settlement of German merchants, "the men of the Emperor," who were by the laws of Ethelred allowed to trade on the same footing as natives, and in return for the privileges granted them paid toll in kind—"at Easter and Christmas two pieces of grey and one of brown cloth, ten pounds of pepper, five pairs of men's gloves, two barrels of vinegar." The Norwegian historians mention "the great cheaping town of Southwark," outside the city, and within the city Billingsgate, being on the way to the river, was treated as a port, and boats paid toll there on arrival. Small boats paid a halfpenny; boats with sails, a penny; ships with wood, one timber; ships

from Rouen with wine and whale, six shillings per ship and a twentieth of the whale.

The money used was almost exclusively silver. The pound was the pound weight of silver, and the shilling (scyllan = to divide) was a division of the pound, the value of which varied in the different provinces, the pound being divided in Kent into twelve, in Wessex into forty-eight, and in Mercia into sixty shillings. There were always, however, two hundred and forty pence in the pound, and from the eighth century the silver penny was almost the only coin in general use, for the shilling was only used for reckoning—*i.e.*, it was only money of account, and no coins were struck with that denomination before the reign of Henry VII.

There was not much money in the country, and though the laws give a long list of money fines to be paid for all sorts of offences, it was expressly stated that they could be paid "in any sound property," and rents and dues of all sorts were frequently paid in kind. In earlier days uncoined silver had almost the same value as coin. Oswald, in a time of scarcity, broke up his silver dish, and distributed the pieces to the poor, who could exchange them for goods, and the rewards given by the chieftains and vikings to their followers generally took the form of rings or bracelets either whole or broken into fragments. All through this period coin was probably little used by the peasantry, and goods must often have been paid for in kind, though their value was always assessed in terms of money.

5. The Position of Women.

The account given by Tacitus of the respect paid to women by the Teutons was probably much exaggerated, but the position of women in Anglo-Saxon England was

fairly good, and it improved considerably during the later period. In early times a wife could still be bought, and the laws of Ethelbert show traces of the even more primitive custom of carrying off wives: "If a man carry off a maid by force, let him pay fifty shillings to her owner, and afterwards buy her from him. . . . If a man carry off a freeman's wife, let him procure another with his own money and deliver her to him." This purchase of a wife, however, must be regarded simply as an arrangement with her kindred, for even after marriage she was not considered entirely as the property of her husband, and if she was slain the wergeld was paid to her kindred and not to him. Moreover, as well as the money paid to her kindred, a present, the Morgengifu, which was often a grant of land, was also given to the wife on the day after the marriage. The nature and extent of the gift was generally a matter of arrangement beforehand, but the marriage was not held to be complete until it was actually handed over. In early days a woman had no voice in her own marriage, and both Church and State forced her to accept the choice of her father without question; then she gained the right to object for any good reason, such as crime or leprosy, and by the tenth century she had gained the right of refusal, and could dispose of herself in marriage, her consent having to be gained as well as that of her kindred. In early days, too, a woman could be sold to slavery with her husband if he committed a crime, but by a law of Alfred she was to remain free if she could prove her innocence. By a law of Cnut married women were allowed to have a storeroom, chest, and cupboard of their own under lock and key, to which they could deny their husbands access.

In early days it was the duty of the wife of the

chieftain, with her attendant women, to spin and weave the clothing of her lord and his thegns, and to wait upon them at table. In the poem of Beowulf their part in the festivals is thus described: "Weahltheow, Hrothgar's queen, went forth, mindful of Court usage, and greeted, gold adorned, the men in the hall. The noble lady first gave the cup to the hereditary ruler of the East Danes, and bade him be joyful at the beer drinking and lovable to the people. . . . Then the lady of the Helmings went round every part of the hall, to old and young proffered the costly goblet; then the free-born folk queen, gold bedecked, went by her lord to sit. From time to time the illustrious queen . . . went up and down the hall, kept the young servers going, and often gave a circlet to some guest ere she went back to her seat. . . . Now and then, before the higher courtiers, Hrothgar's daughter bare the ale cup to the nobles from end to end." In the tenth century the wife of a noble no longer waited on her guest in person, but sat at table with her husband.

Women could hold land, and could inherit, buy and dispose of property themselves; they could sue in their own names in the courts of justice, and could be present and take part in the meetings of the Shire Moot and Witan. As heads of monasteries they ruled over men as well as over women, and abbesses could take part in the National Church Councils. There are some instances of women ruling as queens in their own right, but they are rather rare. "On the death of the West Saxon King in 672, his wife Sexburga reigned for one year in his stead, but as the nobles of the kingdom were indignant she was expelled from the kingdom, as they would not serve under a female ruler" (Matthew of Westminster). A little later in Wessex, as a result of

the crimes of Eadburga, daughter of Offa, who was finally driven out of the country, the very title of Queen was abolished until it was revived by Ethelwulf, the father of Alfred, after his marriage with Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald. In the reign of Alfred the name of the Queen as well as that of the King appears on charters, and some the Queen seems to have signed alone.

How far the women of the lower classes took part in agricultural work it is impossible to say, but the usual domestic occupations of women included spinning and weaving, and the women of the upper classes were generally skilled in embroidery. The embroidery on the ceremonial robes of kings and nobles was the work of the queen and the ladies and their attendants. Golden birds in needlework and a representation of the Fall of Troy are mentioned as subjects for the embroidery of hangings, which were also the work of the women, and one lady wove on tapestry the deeds of her husband.

Education among the upper ranks of society varied a great deal at different times, reaching at some periods a fairly high level, whilst in times of disturbance it was neglected altogether. It is fairly safe to assume that when the men were educated the women were educated as well, though probably not to the same extent, and that education was then not restricted to the monasteries. Edward the Elder had brought up his daughters "in such wise that in childhood they gave their whole attention to literature, and afterwards employed themselves in the labours of the distaff and needle, that thus they might chastely pass their virgin age" (William of Malmesbury). The account Ingulph gives of Edgitha, the wife of Edward the Confessor, proves her

to have been well educated, even though it was generally acknowledged that she was "little skilled in earthly matters." "I have often seen her," he says, "while I was yet a boy, when my father was at the King's Palace and as I came from school. When I have met her she would examine me in my learning, and from grammar she would proceed to logic (which she also understood), concluding with me in the most subtle arguments; then she caused one of her attendant maids to present me with three or four pieces of money and I was dismissed, being sent to the larder, where I was sure to get some eatables." In the monasteries the nuns seem to have studied Latin and even Greek, and to have been proficient in the arts of illuminating and embroidery.

Dress.—The dress of the women consisted of a long, loose robe falling to the ground, with loose sleeves; a hood was worn on the head or a veil, which was wrapped closely round the neck, falling down in front. St. Aldhelm gives a description of a woman of rank who wore "an under-vest of fine linen of a violet colour, and over it a scarlet tunic with full skirts, and with wide sleeves and hood, both striped and faced with silk. The hair was curled with irons over the forehead and temples; ornaments of gold in the form of crescents encircled her neck; bracelets were worn on the arms and rings with precious stones on the fingers, the nails of which were pared to a point to resemble the talons of a falcon. The shoes were of red leather, and stibium was employed to paint the face." In the earliest days women had to cut off their hair at marriage as a sign of servitude, for long hair among the Anglo-Saxons was always the badge of freedom. Later on they were allowed to keep their hair, but after marriage it was always bound closely to the head and might not be worn loose.

With the men the style of dress was much the same for all classes, though the materials were different. Their dress consisted generally of a linen shirt and breeches—generally of linen, too—a tunic reaching to the knee of linen or woollen cloth, with a girdle; a mantle fastened in front or on the shoulder; hose which joined the breeches a little below the knee; and leather shoes fastened with thongs, and opening down the instep. Leg-bands and a covering for the head were worn, but only when travelling. Men of high rank wore gold and precious stones round their necks, golden head bands, bracelets and rings, and their garments were often lined with fur. Both men and women "on occasions of ceremony wore mantles of blue cloth with facings of crimson silk ornaments with straps" (St. Aldhelm), and the state garments of kings and nobles were often very valuable. The chroniclers speak of silk garments woven with golden eagles, coronation robes of silk woven with golden flowers, and of the costly workmanship of cloaks adorned with gold and gems.

The hair of freemen was worn long, parted in the middle, and combed down each side. The Danes, we are told, paid great attention to their personal appearance, and used to comb their hair every day, bathe every Saturday, and frequently change their clothes.

6. Children.

In the early days exposure of infants was general, but it gradually ceased as a child's labour became more valuable than its keep; it was discouraged both by the Church and by the Kings, and Ine gave a reward to anyone who would adopt a child. Parents had unlimited authority over their children, and could sell

them to slavery, but this, again, was discouraged by the Church, though Theodore allowed a father under pressure of extreme poverty to sell a child under the age of seven, and to sell a daughter in marriage under the age of fourteen. Up to the tenth century, however, it was possible for a child to be sold to slavery in payment of penalties incurred by his father.

Up to the age of seven children were left with their mother. From seven to fourteen was the period of "cnihthad," or youth, and at fifteen a boy was considered to be grown up, and to be able to take upon himself the responsibilities of manhood. A boy of rank would of course be trained to the use of arms, and would have to fulfil the duties of a page. Wilfrid in his youth "ministered to all his father's visitors, whether royal attendants or their servants." From the time of Alfred, children were often sent to the houses of nobles to receive a warlike education, and after the marriage of Ethelred and Emma of Normandy, it became the fashion to send boys to the Norman Court, where, though they received an excellent training as soldiers and courtiers, the intellectual side of their education was almost entirely neglected.

The literary education of children of the upper classes, as has been said, varied a great deal at different times. There were schools in many of the monasteries in the latter half of the seventh century, but with the decay of the Church in the eighth and ninth centuries, education, even among the clergy, was at a very low ebb, and illiteracy must have been general among the laity. The Cathedral School, founded by Wilfrid at York, was a centre of education until it was overwhelmed by the Danish raids, and there the children of nobles and princes were received to be trained either for a monastic

life or for the life of the world. The Danish wars were naturally destructive of any intellectual life in the country, and it was not until the reign of Alfred that any effort was made to revive learning, and then only in Wessex. Asser gives an account of the education of the children of Alfred. "Ethelward the younger, by the divine counsels and the admirable prudence of the King, was consigned to the schools of learning, where, with the children of almost all the nobility of the country, and many also who were not noble, he prospered under the diligent care of his teachers. Books in both languages—namely, Latin and Saxon—were read in the school. They also learned to write, so that before they were of an age to practise manly arts—namely, hunting and such pursuits as befit noblemen—they became studious and clever in the liberal arts. Edward and Ethelswitha were bred up in the King's Court, and received great attention from their attendants and nurses; nay, they continue to this day, with the love of all about them, and showing affability and even gentleness towards all, both natives and foreigners, and in complete subjection to their father. Nor among their other studies, which appertain to this life and are fit for noble youths, are they suffered to pass their time idly and unprofitably without learning the liberal arts; for they have carefully learned the Psalms and Saxon books, especially the Saxon poems, and are continued in the habit of making use of books."

Children were subjected to very severe discipline, and frequent floggings were regarded as an essential part of their education. "It is the scourge that teaches children the ornaments of wisdom and to accustom themselves to good manners," was the maxim of Alcuin. Children were always severely flogged on Innocents' Day, "that

the memory of Herod's murder of the Innocents might stick the closer, and in a moderate proportion to act over the cruelty again in kind." In the days when writing was not much used a legal act was often formally witnessed by children, for as they were young their testimony was more valuable than that of adults, and on such an occasion they were always severely flogged afterwards to impress its importance on their minds. Flogging was very general in schools, and in one case at least the boys were roused to retaliate, and attacked a cruel master so violently that he died a few years later. All men, however, did not think that childhood should be spent "under the rod," and Ingulph draws quite a different picture of the school at Croyland Abbey under Turketul towards the end of the tenth century. Turketul received there the sons of nobles to be trained as monks, and "visited them at least once a day that they might not chance to be treated with negligence in any respect, and thus bestowed his attention on the studies and labours of each. On these occasions, a servant attending him with the same, he rewarded those who distinguished themselves above the rest by their industry with figs, raisins, nuts, almonds, or more frequently with apples and pears and other little presents, in order that not so much by harsh words or blows as by frequent encouragements and rewards, he might induce all to show due diligence in the prosecution of their studies."

7. The Hall.

The Anglo-Saxons built almost entirely of wood, and the houses of the nobles all through this period differed in their essential features very little from the Hall of Hrothgar, described in Beowulf. The hall was the chief feature of the house, and was a large rectangular building

constructed of the halved trunks of oak-trees, placed vertically side by side, the round part being outside. The roof was high and pointed, thatched with reeds or straw, and was sometimes supported by a double row of wooden pillars. The hearth was in the middle of the floor, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the roof. The windows afforded no protection against the weather unless detachable wooden shutters were used, and these excluded the light. Probably for light the inmates were partly dependent on the doors, for there was a door at each end of the hall, and in the daytime one at least of these was always left open; at night "they were fastened within and without by iron bands forged cunningly." The walls were bare, except for trophies of the war or chase, which might be hung up, or for hangings which were used for warmth rather than for ornament. For lighting the hall after dark, candles of tallow or wax were used, and sometimes oil-lamps, or cressets, made after the fashion of the Roman lamps; probably at night the fire served for purposes of lighting as well as for warmth. There was hardly any furniture; the tables were only temporary wooden boards put up for meals, and wooden benches fixed against the walls served as seats by day, and might serve as beds by night, for the hall was the sleeping-place of visitors and of the servants and followers of the lord.

Less important houses sometimes consisted of a hall only, but in larger houses there were as well "bowers" —smaller rooms which were used as private sitting-rooms and bedrooms for the lord and his family, and were either attached to the hall or built near it. There was more comfort in the bower than in the hall. Hangings were more elaborate and more generally used, and there was more furniture—carved seats with cloth coverings, footstools, a table, and a chest. Recesses

were sometimes curtained off as sleeping apartments, but bedsteads were only used by the wealthy, and benches, supplied with bolsters and pillows stuffed with straw, were often utilised as beds. Linen sheets were used from very early times, and goat and bear skins were often used as bed coverings. There was often a chapel on one side of the hall and a kitchen on the other, though the cooking was sometimes done in the open air. Near the hall there were often as well stables and barns, where the grooms and herdsmen lived with the cattle and horses, and groups of huts in which the theows lived. The whole formed an irregular group of low buildings, almost all of one storey, which were generally surrounded by an earthen wall or "burh" and sometimes protected by a moat as well.

The obligation to exercise hospitality to strangers and travellers was binding on all. The door of the hall was always open, and every traveller would be allowed to enter, provided only that he left his weapons at the door, and would be welcomed by the lord, and allowed to stay and enjoy his hospitality without question for three days. It was this freedom of access to the hall that led to the death of King Edmund at the hands of the robber Leofu, who had been banished and returned without leave. Entering the hall when a feast was going on, he was recognised only by the King, who rose to expel him, but who was attacked and killed before his thegns were able to come to the rescue.

Feasting was one of the great features in the life of the upper classes, and gluttony and intemperance were always recognised even at that time as the most salient national vices. The food was simple in quality, though abundant in quantity, and the way in which it was served was simpler still. Roast meat was brought in on spits; there

were no plates, forks, spoons, and few knives provided, and hands were almost exclusively used. The feasts were invariably concluded by prolonged drinking bouts, and the favourite form of drinking-cup was still the horn, which had to be emptied at one draught. To refuse to take a part in the public feasting, or to withdraw while it was going on, was regarded as a sign of weakness and effeminacy, and in the host as an insult to his guests. The withdrawal of Edwy at his coronation feast, and his forcible recall by Dunstan, was said to have been the first sign of the trouble that led afterwards to his deposition.

8. Amusements.

A great deal of the country was still covered with woods, and wild animals, such as the red deer, fallow deer, wild boar, and wolf, were still plentiful. Bears were occasionally found, but though they were used all through the Middle Ages for the purpose of bear-baiting and for exhibition, they were more often than not obtained from abroad. Wolves were so numerous that January was often spoken of as wolf-month, and they did so much damage to crops and stock that the Kings made attempts to reduce their numbers and exterminate them. Athelstan organised great hunts for the slaughter of wolves, and compelled the tributary Welsh to supply him annually with trained wolf-hounds, which the royal tenants had to keep at their own expense. Edgar is said to have demanded from the Welsh an annual tribute of 300 wolves' heads (but the authority for this statement is not very reliable), and villagers were ordered to find out the haunts of the wolves and destroy the cubs.

Hunting was the favourite recreation of the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns and people, even with such kings as Alfred and Edward the Confessor, but it was not until

the reign of Cnut that any laws were made to protect the forests, and to keep them as royal preserves. Cnut forbade hunting in the royal forests except with royal permission, and forbade anyone under the rank of a king's thegn to keep greyhounds within ten miles of a royal forest unless they had been "lawed" (lamed by cutting the knee of the right foreleg) in the presence of the King's forester.

The earliest methods of hunting were by pitfalls lightly covered with boughs and leaves, etc. A solitary hunter would take up his station in the forest, would employ slaves and dogs to rouse the animal from its lair, and as it approached would attack it with knife or spear. Another, and a safer method, was to stretch strong nets, supported by boughs, across the tracks of wild beasts, and attack them when entangled, and for large hunts hazel and underwood were used as well as nets. When these great hunts were organised the King could call upon all the people in the neighbourhood of the forest to help, and in Hereford it was the duty of every house to send a man to be stationed in the wood whenever the King hunted. There was also a large staff of hunters whose duties are explained by the King's hunter in the Early English Dialogue: "I spread my nets and set them in a fixed place, and instruct my hounds to pursue the wild deer till they come to the nets unexpectedly and so are entangled, and I slay them in the nets. I give to the King what I take because I am his huntsman. He clothes me well and feeds me, and sometimes gives me a horse or a bracelet that I may follow my art more lustily." Until Danish times men generally hunted on foot, partly because of the density of the forests, partly because the Anglo-Saxons disliked riding. Alfred said: "No man ever rides for

pleasure, though some do for health, some for exercise, and others for expedition." Edmund was the first king who is mentioned as hunting on horseback.

Hunting was forbidden by law on Sunday, and by a law of Edgar clergy were forbidden to hunt at all.

For procuring game and waterfowl for food hawks were used, but they were not in early times highly trained. They would be caught in the autumn, used through the winter, and set free in the spring, for they were not worth the expense of their keep through the summer. When at a later time hawking became popular as a sport, and it became customary for nobles and gentlemen to appear in public with hawks on their wrists, more attention was paid to training, and a well-trained hawk was very valuable.

Music was a favourite recreation, and was the invariable accompaniment of feasting. The harp was the instrument of the upper classes, and to acquire skill in performing on the harp was an essential part of the education of every gentleman. There were as well travelling harpers, and harpers were always attached to the households of great men, sometimes even accompanying their lords to battle, so they might be able to sing their deeds more vividly in verse. They were sometimes used as envoys, and were always gladly received whether in the monastery or in the palace. The gleemen were often jesters as well as harpers, and their art tended to degenerate into buffoonery. Jugglers who threw knives and balls into the air; men with animals, especially bears, trained to dance; dancers, whose performance was more of the nature of tumbling than what is now understood by dancing, were all part of the itinerant population, who earned their living by bringing amusement to the homes of the people.

CHAPTER VI

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

The reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1065) was marked by the growth of Norman influence in the country, and by the rivalry between the Norman favourites of the King and the English nobles, among whom Godwin took the lead.

Of the family of Godwin nothing is known. He himself had served in war under Cnut, whose sister he had married, and who had given him the earldom of Wessex, which then included all England south of the Thames. He maintained his power through the reigns of Cnut's sons, and William of Malmesbury attributes the accession of Edward mainly to his influence: "He was a man of ready wit, and spoke fluently in the vernacular tongue; powerful in speech, and powerful in bringing over the people to whatever he desired. Some yielded to his authority; some were influenced by presents; others admitted the right of Edward; and the few who resisted in defiance of justice and equity were driven out of the kingdom."

The power of Godwin's family was now predominant, and the greater part of the country was under their control. Godwin himself still had Wessex; his eldest son, Sweyn, had an earldom in the district of Gloucester; Harold had East Anglia; Tostig, Northumbria; and his daughter, Edgitha, married the King. Their influence

at court, however, was counteracted by that of the Norman favourites who held many of the chief offices of State, while a Norman, Robert of Jumièges, was made Archbishop of Canterbury. The rivalry between Normans and English reached an acute stage in 1051, the immediate cause of the outbreak being the quarrel between Eustace of Boulogne and the citizens of Dover, of which an account is given in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

"And then came Eustace from beyond the sea, soon after the Bishop, and went to the King and spoke to him what he would, and then turned homeward. When he came east to Canterbury he and his men took a meal there, and wended to Dover. When he was some mile or more on this side of Dover, there he put on his byrny [coat-of-mail], and all his men [did the like], and they fared to Dover. When they came thither, then would they lodge themselves where it pleased them. Then came one of his men, and would put up in the house of a householder against his will and wounded the householder, and the householder slew the other. Then Eustace got upon his horse and his companions upon theirs, and they fared to the householder and slew him within his own hearth, and then turned up towards the town, and slew both within and without more than twenty men, and the townsmen slew nineteen men on the other side, and wounded they knew not how many. And Eustace escaped with a few men, and wended back again to the King, and made known to him partially how they had fared. And the King became very wroth with the townsmen, and the King summoned Earl Godwin, and bade him fare into Kent with unpeace to Dover, for Eustace had declared to the King that it had been more the guilt of the townsfolk than his; but it

was not so, and the Earl would not agree to the inroad, because he was loath to injure the district of his own people." Godwin's sons now collected an army, and threatened war if the King would not give Eustace up to them. Edward, having a sufficiently strong military force at his disposal, refused, and summoned Godwin to appear before the Witan on a certain day, and on his refusal outlawed the whole family. For a time the ruin of the family seemed to be complete. Godwin, with his sons, Tostig, Sweyn, and Gurth, embarked with a good deal of treasure, and went to Flanders; Harold and Leofwine went to Bristol and then to Ireland. Even Edgitha did not escape the disgrace that had fallen on her family, for "all the property of the Queen was seized, and herself delivered into the custody of the King's sister at Wherwell, lest she alone should be devoid of care whilst all her relatives were sighing for their country" (William of Malmesbury).

The fall of Earl Godwin left French influences supreme at the court, and it was just at this time that the Chronicle mentions the visit of William: "Then came Earl William from beyond the sea with a troop of Frenchmen, and the King received him and as many of his companions as it pleased him, and let him away again." The Normans, however, were very unpopular, and it was the discontent caused by their influence that made it possible for Godwin and his sons to return the following year. In 1052 "Harold came from Ireland and harried the west coast, and the land folk gathered together against him both from Somerset and from Devonshire, and he put them to flight and slew more than thirty good thegns, besides other folk." Edward sent out a fleet to intercept Godwin, but he evaded it and landed on the south coast, "and the time that he was here

in the land he enticed to him all the men of Kent and all the housecarls from Hastings and everywhere about the sea coast and Sussex and Surrey, and many else in addition thereto. Then all declared that they would live and die with him." Joined by Harold, and encouraged by the good-will of the people, he went to Southwark, and then, sailing up the river with the tide, he advanced on London. The King had collected a large fleet and army, but they had little desire to fight against their own countrymen, and peace was made, by which Godwin and his sons were inlawed by the Witan, and received back all their possessions. Sweyn had not returned; he had gone from Flanders on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem barefoot, and died on the way back, even then doing "all too little amends for the property of God, which he had [taken] from many holy places." The Normans were now driven out, and English influence was again supreme in the country. A little later Earl Godwin died. "In this year was the King at Winchester at Easter and Earl Godwin with him, and Earl Harold, his son, and Tostig. Then on the second day of Easter he sat with the King at a meal when suddenly he sank down near the footstool, deprived of speech and of all his might, . . . and he was carried into the King's chamber, and they thought it would pass over. But it was not so, and he continued so, speechless and mightless, until the Thursday, and then gave up his life, and he lies there within the old minster." This is the account given by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and there seems to be no ground for the tale that his death was the result of his failure in the ordeal of the corsned when trying to prove his innocence of the death of the King's brother, Alfred, who was murdered in the reign of Harthacnut.

He was succeeded as Earl of Wessex by his son,

Harold, who gave up his own earldom of East Anglia to his brother, Gurth.

Edward died in 1065. Just before there had taken place the consecration of Westminster Abbey, which had been built as an act of penance, because the King had been unable to perform a vow that he had made to go to Rome. Edward leaves behind him a rather colourless impression—that of a king who was a monk rather than a ruler, whose weakness of character allowed him to have little real influence in the government, and whose education in Normandy, where civilization had advanced more rapidly than in England, had unfitted him for the rougher life of his native country, and for the position of an English king. William of Malmesbury dwells chiefly on his piety, which at that time took highest rank among virtues, even in the case of kings, and says he was famed for miracles and for the spirit of prophecy; he was the first king who exercised the royal touch, and it was reported that many cures of blindness were effected even by the water in which he had washed his hands. "He was a man from the simplicity of his manners little calculated to govern, but devoted to God, and in consequence directed by Him. For while he continued to reign there arose no popular commotions which were not immediately quelled; no foreign wars; all was calm and peaceable both at home and abroad, which is the more an object of wonder, because he conducted himself so mildly that he would not even utter a word of reproach to the meanest person. . . . The regard his subjects entertained for him was extreme, as was also the fear of foreigners, for God assisted his simplicity, that he might be feared, for he knew not how to be angry. . . .

"In the exaction of taxes he was sparing, and he abominated the insolence of collectors; in eating and

drinking, he was free from the voluptuousness which his state allowed. On the more solemn festivals, though dressed in robes interwoven with gold, which the Queen had most splendidly embroidered, yet still he had such forbearance as to be sufficiently majestic without being haughty, considering in such matters rather the bounty of God than the pomp of the world. There was one earthly enjoyment in which he chiefly delighted; which was hunting with fleet hounds, whose opening in the woods he used with pleasure to encourage; and again with the pouncing of birds, whose nature it is to prey on their kindred species. In these exercises, after hearing Divine service in the morning, he employed himself whole days. In other respects he was a man by choice devoted to God, and lived the life of an angel in the administration of his kingdom. To the poor and to the stranger, more especially foreigners and men of religious orders, he was kind in invitation, munificent in his presents, and constantly exciting the monks of his country to imitate his holiness. He was of a becoming stature, his beard and hair milk-white; his countenance florid; fair throughout his whole person; and his form of admirable proportion" (William of Malmesbury).

After the death of Edward there was no direct heir to the throne. Edward, one of the sons of Ethelred the Unready, who had taken refuge in Hungary, had already been summoned to England, but had died soon after his arrival, leaving three children—Margaret, who married Malcolm IV. of Scotland; Christina, who went into a monastery; and Edgar the Atheling, who was weak-minded, and gave little prospect of becoming a satisfactory ruler. The Witan consequently chose Harold as King, for though not of royal race he was the ablest man in the country, and trouble was likely to

arise from the ambition of William of Normandy, who, it was known, intended to put forward a claim to the throne, based on promises made to him by Edward and Harold. What were the exact terms of the promise made by Edward is not known, but detailed accounts are given by the chroniclers of the incident that led to the promise of Harold.

"When Earl Harold was staying at an estate which belonged to him, namely at Boscham, he one day entered a fishing-boat to amuse himself, and, when in the progress of his sport, he had advanced into the open sea, on a sudden a storm arose, and he with his companions was driven to a village in the territory of Ponthieu, and was taken prisoner by the men of that country and bound with chains and thrown into prison, as they charged him with having come thither as a spy. Harold, being a crafty man, considered how he might obtain his release, and sent a messenger, whom he induced with large promises to carry the message to William, Duke of Normandy, telling him that he had been sent to him by King Edward to reveal some important affairs to him. He also added that he was detained a prisoner by Godwin (Guy), Count of Ponthieu, and so prevented from performing his commission. Then Harold, at the command of William, was released by Godwin and conducted into Normandy, where Duke William received him with all honour and gave him honourable presents of food and clothing. Then Harold, that he might obtain more favour in the eyes of William, bound himself by an oath to give up to him the Castle of Canterbury, which was under his authority, and also the Kingdom of England after the death of King Edward. . . . Others relate this matter in a different way, saying that Harold had been sent into Normandy by King Edward on purpose

to conduct Duke William into England, as King Edward was thinking of making him his heir" (Matthew of Westminster).

If this story is true, it adds nothing to the strength of William's claim to the throne, and he himself knew quite well that neither Edward nor Harold had any right to grant away the crown, and asserted that he was coming to England only to have his claim tried by the Witan. He also knew perfectly well that he could only gain the country by force, and with the old Northman love of adventure was preparing to come over with an army and conquer it. He had gained the sanction of the Pope, who sent him a consecrated banner, by a promise to bring the Church of England under papal control. But he had some difficulties with his own subjects; the work of collecting troops and money was not easy, further delays were caused by contrary winds, and it was not until the autumn that he was able to cross the Channel.

Meanwhile, Harold had been making preparations to resist the threatened invasion. "When the fleet was gathered together he fared into the Isle of Wight, and lay there the whole summer and autumn, and a land fyrd was kept everywhere by the sea, though in the end it availed nought. When it was the Nativity of St. Mary (September 8), the men's provisions were gone, and they might no longer be kept there. Then were the men allowed to go home, and the King rode inland, and the ships were taken to London, and many perished before they came thither" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle).

It was at this crisis that Harold was called North by the invasion of Tostig and Harold Hardrada of Norway. Tostig had, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, been driven out of his earldom of Northumberland by a rising of the people, and had withdrawn to Flanders, and

Morcar had taken his place. Now, in alliance with Harold Hardrada of Norway, he landed in Yorkshire in September and burnt Scarborough, and Edwin and Morcar had been defeated before Harold arrived at York. Tostig and Harold Hardrada, meanwhile, had gone on to Stamford Bridge, leaving some of their troops behind with the ships. Warned of the approach of the English army by clouds of dust, Tostig advised Harold Hardrada to bring up the men from the ships; but Harold was rash and over-confident, and refused to withdraw. The Norwegian army was drawn up in the form of a hollow circle, with the shields forming a continuous barrier, and the spears driven into the ground in order to check the rush of the cavalry. As the English advanced, they could see the tall form of the Norwegian King, with his bright blue mantle and glittering helmet, surveying the line. His horse suddenly stumbled and threw him, and Harold, being told who he was, remarked: "A stately man, but his luck, you see, has already forsaken him." Tostig was in another part of the field, and Harold sent messengers to him to try and negotiate. The envoy rode up to the hostile army and asked for Tostig, and when he rode up delivered his message: "King Harold sends you his greeting and this message; he offers peace and all Northumbria: aye, and to secure you as a friend and ally, he would not deem a third of the kingdom too high a price." Already, however, fighting had begun, and Tostig refused to listen to any terms unless some indemnity would be given to his ally; but all that Harold would promise him was "seven feet of English ground, or as much more as his length exceeds that of other men." "Then ride back to your master," was Tostig's reply, "and let him arm for the fight, for

never shall it become a truthful tradition among the Norwegians that Earl Tostig forsook their King in the land of his enemies. Together will we conquer England, or die with honour." In the battle that followed both Tostig and Harold Hardrada were slain, and three hundred ships and a vast amount of booty were captured.

It was when celebrating his victory at York that news was brought to Harold of the invasion of William in the South.

After long delays which had tried the temper both of the troops and of the leaders, the wind had changed and made it possible to embark. "A joyful clamour then arising, summoned everyone to the ships. The Earl himself, first launching from the Continent into the deep, awaited the rest, at anchor, nearly in mid-Channel. All then assembled round the crimson sail of the Admiral's ship, and having first dined they arrived after a favourable passage at Hastings. As he disembarked he slipped down, but turned the accident to his advantage, a soldier who stood near calling out to him, 'You hold England, my Lord, its future King.' He then restrained his whole army from plundering, warning them that they should now abstain from what must hereafter be their own; and for fifteen successive days he remained perfectly quiet, and he seemed to think of nothing less than war."

Meanwhile Harold was hurrying south. He had sent messages to Edwin and Morcar to join him with the troops of Mercia, but they were jealous of the power of the family of Godwin, and hoping that, in the event of Harold's defeat, William would be satisfied with the South, and allow them to rule the North and Centre independently, they took no notice of the

summons. Harold collected such men as he could in his hurried march south, but they were mainly untrained labourers taken from the fields, and armed with nothing better than their agricultural implements, and the strength of his army lay in the body of housecarls, who were well trained and well equipped. When he arrived at the coast "he sent out some persons to reconnoitre the number and strength of the enemy. These, being taken within the camp, William ordered to be led amongst the tents, and, after feasting them plentifully, to be sent back uninjured to their lord. On their return Harold inquired what news they brought. When, after relating at full the noble confidence of the General, they gravely added that almost all his army had the appearance of priests, as they had the whole face, both lips, shaven, for the English leave the upper lip unshorn, suffering the hair continually to increase. . . . The King smiled at the simplicity of the relators, observing, with a pleasant laugh, that they were not priests but soldiers, strong in arms and invincible in spirit." The English took up their position on the hill of Senlac, where they awaited the attack of the enemy, and the Norman chroniclers say that they spent the night before the battle in feasting and singing. "All were on foot, armed with battle-axes, and covering themselves in front by the junction of their shields, they formed an impenetrable body. . . . The King himself, on foot, stood with his brother near the standard, in order that while all shared equal danger, none might think of retreating. This standard William sent after the victory to the Pope; it was sumptuously embroidered with gold and precious stones in the form of a man fighting" (William of Malmesbury).

The Normans "had spent the whole of the preceding

night in sleep, or in confession of their sins, or in preparing their arms. . . . William strengthened his first line with infantry armed with bows and arrows, clubs and battle-axes. The cavalry, in accordance with the usual practice in military discipline, he divided among the two wings, placing them in good order a little to the rear. . . . Then the song of Roland was begun, the standard was raised and waved, the trumpets and bugles sounded, and, invoking the aid of the heavenly powers, they began the battle on both sides. Both armies fought with great vigour, and the battle was a long time in doubt. . . . But when William perceived this, seeing the valiant constancy that existed on the opposite side of his invincible enemies, and that, although they were few in number, they were in very close and compact order, he betakes him to a device of skill as the vehemence of sheer courage could not succeed. Therefore . . . the warlike Duke William cunningly made a signal to his troops to feign to flee. . . . By which device the English army was at once dissolved like sand without lime, and as if they had nothing to do but to slaughter the flying enemy, they incautiously hastened their own destruction. For the Normans, hurrying their battalions back again, rearranged their line of battle in perfect order, and in a moment put to flight the English who were rushing on triumphantly. At last the English, having occupied a mound, drove the Normans, who were vehemently influenced with heat, and panting, up the hill and down into the valley again, and without much trouble they rolled down large stones upon them from the top of the hill, and, hurling javelins among them slew many of them, overthrowing them in many various manners." Still the English had destroyed their chance of victory by breaking their

line of defence in the first instance to pursue the Normans, and they were being gradually driven back. Harold, with his housecarls, still maintained his position on the hill, and the Norman arrows took no effect on their impenetrable barrier of shields until the order was given to shoot the arrows into the air. Then "at last Harold fell, with his brain pierced through by a wound from an arrow, numbers of which rattled through the air, flying like wintry hail; and so his brains were scattered about and he died. . . . After the death of the King, then the burden of the battle turned against the English, and the common soldiers sought refuge in flight. . . . But the nobles, preferring to die rather than to flee disgracefully, persevered in doing battle . . . till night put an end to the contest. But the flight of the English of ignoble birth lasted till night, and when that came it descended in the complete triumph of the Normans over their enemies. . . . Duke William, now that everything had turned out successfully, permitted his enemies who were slain to be buried, if any people chose to perform that work of charity. But those of his own soldiers, of whom the fortune of war had deprived him, he caused to be interred much more honourably, with great funeral pomp and solemnity. And the body of King Harold he sent to his mother, who begged it of him, without any ransom, although she, by her messengers, had offered a great sum. And when she received it she buried it at Waltham, in the church which Harold himself had built. . . . And there was founded a house for a religious brotherhood on the very spot where the greatest slaughter and bloodshed had taken place, that the brethren might for ever offer prayers to God for the souls who were there slain; and the Duke and other devout nobles endowed it with

ample possessions . . . and the Abbey, in memory of the conflict that took place, is called Battle to this day . . . and so, by the excellently regulated arrangement of God, who governs and who overturns kingdoms . . . the Kingdom of England was transferred to the dominion of the Normans" (Matthew of Westminster).

The effect of the battle was to place the South of England in William's hands. After waiting five days at Hastings he marched through the South-Eastern counties, received the submission of Dover and Canterbury, and, according to the Chronicle, "harried all the land he passed over," but though there was probably a good deal of plundering by the army, there was no systematic destruction of property. His aim now was to get to London and be accepted by the people as King. London, which had decided to take Edgar the Atheling as King, at first made some show of resistance, but after Edwin and Morcar had withdrawn with their forces, and William had crossed the Thames at Wallingford, it was clear that resistance was hopeless, and as he approached the city he was met by a deputation of the citizens led by Ealdred, Archbishop of York, and Edgar the Atheling, and "they gave hostages and swore oaths to him, and he promised them that he would be a kind lord to them. . . . Then, on Midwinter's Day, Archbishop Ealdred hallowed him King at Westminster, and he pledged him on Christ's book and also swore, before he would set the crown on his head, that he would govern this nation as well as any King before him had best done if they would serve him faithfully" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). A more detailed account of the coronation is given by Ordericus Vitalis: "On Christmas Day the English assembled at London for William's coronation, and a guard of Norman troops was posted round the Abbey, mounted and fully armed,

to prevent any treasonable and seditious attempt. Then, in the presence of the Bishops, Abbots, and nobles of the whole realm of Albion, Aldred, the Archbishop, consecrated William Duke of Normandy King of England, and placed the royal crown on his head. . . . Meanwhile, at the instigation of the Devil, the enemy of all good, an unforeseen occurrence . . . suddenly happened. For when Alfred, the Archbishop, was demanding of the English, and Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, of the Normans, whether they consented to have William for their King, and the whole assembly loudly gave their willing assent with one voice though not in one language; the men-at-arms, who formed the guard outside the Abbey, upon hearing the shouts of joyful acclamation raised by the people in the church in a language they did not understand, suspected some treachery, and imprudently set fire to the neighbouring houses. The flames quickly spreading, the people in the church were seized with panic in the midst of their rejoicings, and crowds of men and women of all ranks and conditions eagerly struggled to make their escape from the church, as if they were threatened with immediate danger. The Bishops only, with some few of the clergy and monks, maintained their post before the altar, and trembling with fear, completed the coronation office with some difficulty, the King himself being much alarmed."

After the coronation William was legally in the position of an English king, and any opposition to his authority could be punished as treason. As yet he had only actual control of the South-East, and it was some years before the conquest of the rest of the country was completed. In the spring of 1067 he went over to Normandy, taking the leading men with him as hostages, and was absent for nine months. "Meanwhile the

English were oppressed by the insolence of the Normans, and subjected to grievous outrages of the haughty governors, who disregarded the King's instructions. The chiefs of inferior rank, who had the custody of the castles, treated the natives, both gentle and simple, with the utmost scorn, and levied on them the most unjust taxation. Bishop Odo himself and William Fitz Osbern, the King's lieutenants, puffed up with pride, gave no heed to the reasonable complaints of his English subjects, and disdained to weigh them in the balance of equity" (Ordericus Vitalis). There were revolts in the East caused by the tyranny of Odo, and the West was disturbed by Eadric the Wild, and by raids led by the sons of Harold. The City of Exeter made an attempt to maintain its independence, and when ordered by the King to take an oath of fealty returned the reply: "We will neither swear allegiance to the King nor admit him within our walls; but will pay him tribute, according to ancient custom." "It does not suit me to have subjects on such conditions," was the King's answer, and after a siege Exeter was forced to submit.

The most serious trouble, however, was with the North, where the English and the Welsh joined together and were helped by the Danes and by the Scotch King, who had married Margaret, the sister of Edgar the Atheling. The immediate cause of the outbreak seems to have been the appointment of the Norman earl. "In this year (1068) King William gave to Earl Robert the Earldom of Northumberland. There came the men of the country against him and slew him and 900 men with him. And Edgar Atheling came then with all the Northumbrians to York, and the townsmen made peace with him. And King William came from the South with all his force and ravaged the town and slew many

hundred men. And the Atheling went back again to Scotland." Thinking the district was quiet, William returned to the South, but the following year fresh disturbances broke out. "In this year died Archbishop Ealdred of York. . . . Soon after this came from Denmark three sons of King Sweyn, and Asbiorn Jarl and Thorkell Jarl with two hundred and forty ships into the Humber; and there came to meet them Edgar Child and Earl Waltheof and Maerleswegen and Earl Gospatric, with the Northumbrians and all the country people, riding and walking, with a countless army, greatly rejoicing, and so all unanimously went to York and stormed and demolished the Castle and gained innumerable treasures therein, and slew there many hundred Frenchmen and led many with them to the ships. . . . When the King learnt this he went northward with all his force that he could gather, and completely harried and laid waste the shire. And the fleet lay all the winter in the Humber, where the King could not come at them." This is the only reference made by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to the systematic devastation of the North, which made it impossible for many years for people to live over a district of a hundred square miles, and which, successful as it was in its political object of subduing the North and making invasion impossible, was condemned by English and Normans alike. "Never did William commit so much cruelty. . . . In the fulness of his wrath he ordered the corn and cattle, with the implements of husbandry and every sort of provisions to be collected in heaps and set on fire till the whole was consumed, and thus destroyed at once all that could serve for the support of life in the whole country lying beyond the Humber" (Ordericus Vitalis). "Thus the resources of a province, once flourishing and the nurse of tyrants, were cut off by

fire, slaughter, and devastation; the ground, for more than sixty miles, totally uncultivated and unproductive, remains bare to the present day. Should any stranger now see it, he laments over the once magnificent cities; the towers threatening heaven itself with their loftiness, the fields abundant in pasturage and watered with rivers, and, if any ancient inhabitant remains, he knows it no longer" (William of Malmesbury).

After the suppression of the North the only further difficulty was the resistance of Hereward in the island of Ely, where the leaders of the English made their last stand. "The Earls Edwin, Mercher, Siward, together with Egelwin, Bishop of Durham, and many thousands of the clergy and laity, not being able to bear with the anger of King William, took refuge in the woods and wilds. And after they had committed many excesses in different places, to the injury of the King, they at length returned to the Isle of Ely, where they chose a place of refuge, and after sallying out from thence in a hostile manner under the command of Hereward, a bold, noble chief of English extraction, they harassed that part of the country in no slight degree to the King's cost; they also constructed a fort of wood in the marshes, which is to this day called by the inhabitants of the province 'Hereward's Fort.' On this being rumoured abroad, King William came upon them with the whole strength of his kingdom, laid siege to the fort both by land and water, and then, by cutting roads of great length, and building very large bridges, he rendered the bogs passable to both men and beasts, and erected a new fort at a place called Wisbeach. When the enemies of the King learned this, they all, except Hereward, who led his followers out of the island with a strong hand, came in a body and gave themselves up to William to undergo whatever

punishment he chose. . . . But Hereward, as long as he lived, practised all the stratagems he could think of against King William" (Roger of Wendover).

There was no further difficulty with the English, and on the whole the conquest of the country had been carried out fairly easily, for the revolts had been local and isolated, and the absence of a leader and the lack of national unity had made any general resistance impossible.

CHAPTER VII

ENGLAND UNDER THE NORMAN KINGS

(*a*) *The First Three Norman Kings.*—During the Norman period the Crown was the only strong power in the country, and the first three kings, though men of very different characters, resembled one another in their strength of will and in their determination to assert the royal authority over all classes of the people.

William I. showed his political genius by the way in which he adopted what was best in both the Norman and the English systems of government. His legal position was that of an English king, but he exercised an authority which no king had had before his time, for, standing between the English people on the one hand and the Norman barons on the other, he realised that it was only by making the Crown supreme that it would be possible to maintain order in the country. The English were kept under control by the stern suppression of revolts, and by the castles which arose all over the country; but the real danger to royal authority lay in the feudal independence of the Norman barons, and this he determined to check. Though feudal land tenure already existed in English, it was only after the Conquest that feudal principles of government were introduced. William I., as feudal sovereign, was supreme landowner; all men who held land in the country, held it from the King

either directly or indirectly, and the King made use of his feudal rights as a means of getting money and troops from his tenants. The tenants-in-chief were a very large and heterogeneous class, but all the more important were Normans, and William took steps to prevent them from gaining the same independent authority that they had in France. Except on the borders, where the Palatine earldoms were formed, they were not allowed to rule over large provinces, and though their lands were often very extensive—Roger of Hereford, for instance, had two hundred and eighty manors—they were scattered about the country. More important was the way in which royal authority was asserted over the sub-tenants. At a great meeting held at Salisbury Plain in 1086, it was decided that an oath of fealty was to be taken to the King by all landholders, "be they the men of what man they might," and henceforth the duty of a sub-tenant to the King came before the duty he owed to his lord. The central government became Norman in character. The Witan, hitherto a national council, now became a royal court; it was soon known as the King's Court, and was attended only by royal officials, and by a few nobles and bishops specially summoned by the King. Larger meetings of landholders were held three times a year, when the King wore his crown, at London, Winchester, and Gloucester; but these were great court festivals, and had little political importance.

The increased power exercised by the King and the expense incurred by the wars in France made a larger revenue necessary, and in addition to the revenues of the Anglo-Saxon King, more feudal payments were taken from the tenants-in-chief, and Danegeld became a permanent land-tax. It was in order to make an

assessment of the country for purposes of taxation that the Domesday survey was undertaken. "And after this the King held a Great Council, and spoke very deeply with his Witan concerning this land, how it was occupied and with what men. Then he sent his men all over England into every shire, and caused them to ascertain how many hundred hides were in the shires, and what of land and of cattle the King himself owned in this country, and what dues he ought to receive every twelve months from the shires. Also he caused them to write down how much of land belonged to his Archbishops and his suffragan Bishops, and his Abbots and his Earls; and—though it make my tale too long—what and how much in land and in cattle each man possessed, who was an occupier of land in England, and how much money it was worth. So very narrowly did he cause the survey to be made that there was not a single hide or rood of land, nor even—it is shame to relate, but it seemed to him no shame to do—was an ox or a cow or a pig left, that was not set down in his writing, and afterwards all these writings were brought to him" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). Roger of Wendover adds: "Then for each plough throughout his whole kingdom —that is, for each portion of land that could be tilled by one plough in the year—he received six silver shillings." The method by which he gained the information was by sending royal commissioners round to the county courts, and here the men of the hundred and representatives of the villages, if called upon, gave evidence about the land on oath.

William met his death fighting in France in 1087. In his character as drawn by the chroniclers chief stress is laid on his great strength, both of mind and body, and on the strict order that he kept in the country.

"He was of great stature, extraordinary corpulence, fierce countenance; his forehead bare of hair, of such great strength of arm that it was often matter of surprise that no one was able to draw his bow, which himself could bend when his horse was at full gallop" (William of Malmesbury). "Though humble to the servants of God, he was obdurate to those who withstood him. . . . It behoved everyone to submit to his will who had any regard for his favour, or for his own money or lands, or even for his life" (Henry of Huntingdon). "King William was a very wise man and very powerful, and more worshipful and stronger than any of his predecessors were. He was mild to the good men who loved God, and over all measure stern to the men who gainsaid his will. . . . So also was he a very stark man and terrible, so that none dared do anything against his will. He had earls put in his bonds who did against his will; Bishops he deposed from their bishoprics and Abbots from their abbacies, and thegns he put in prison, and at length he spared not his own brother. . . . Amongst other things is not to be forgotten the good peace that he made in this land, so that a man who was himself of some account might fare unmolested over his kingdom with his bosom full of gold, and no man dared slay another had he done ever so great evil to the other" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle).

William II. was in every way inferior to his father—in his violence, selfishness, rapacity, and neglect of the interests of the people—but he had some of his father's strength of will, and was able to assert the royal authority over the barons. The evils due to his misrule increased as time went on. "At first, as long as Archbishop Lanfranc lived, he abstained from every crime. . . . After his death, for a time he showed him-

self so variable that the balance hung even betwixt vices and virtues. At last, however, in his latter years, the desire after good grew cold, and the crop of evil increased to ripeness . . . for he feared God but little, man not at all. . . . He was, when abroad and in public assemblies, of supercilious look, darting his threatening eye on the bystander, and with assumed severity and ferocious voice assailing such as conversed with him" (William of Malmsbury). "He was very strong and stern over his land and his men, and towards all his neighbours, and very dreadful. . . . In his days all righteousness died . . . all that was hateful to God and to right-thinking men was customary in this land." Urged on by his adviser, Ralph Flambard, "the exterminator of the poor, the confiscator of other men's inheritance," he plundered the nobles, the people, and the Church. At length, "hateful wellnigh to all his people and abominable to God . . . he departed in the midst of his unrighteousness" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). Killed in the New Forest, and buried the next day at Winchester, "his tomb was watered by no one's tears, so great was the joy that people felt at his departure." "The church bells . . . tolled not for him, and out of the vast heaps of treasure which he had wrung from rich and poor, no alms were given for his soul."

A change came about with the accession of Henry I., the scholar King, who realised that learning could help a king in the work of government, and who "often in his father's hearing made use of the proverb, 'An illiterate king is a crowned ass.'" As soon as he came to the throne he took steps to conciliate the nation and to remove the evils from which all classes had suffered. He issued the Charter of Liberties, guaranteeing to the

nobles freedom from unjust taxation, and to the people the enjoyment of the old English laws; he imprisoned Ranulph, recalled Anselm from exile and married the Scotch Princess Edith, who was of English descent. He had great administrative ability and a great love of order and justice, and was thus well fitted to carry on the work of his father. With the help of his adviser, Roger of Salisbury, he organised the Central Courts, and connected the central with the local government by sending the itinerant justices from the Curia Regis to visit the Shire Courts, where they could act as a check on the arbitrary authority of the sheriff. "What more particularly distinguished Henry was that though frequently and long absent from his kingdom on account of the commotions in Normandy, yet he so restrained the rebellious by the terror of his name that peace remained undisturbed in England. . . . Inflexible in the administration of justice, he ruled his people with moderation, the nobility with condescension; seeking after robbers and counterfeiters with the greatest diligence, and punishing them when discovered; neither was he by any means negligent in matters of lesser importance" (William of Malmesbury). Notwithstanding the fact that "he was not prone to personal combat," and preferred contending by counsel rather than by war, he was constantly forced to fight to repress the revolts of the barons who resented his strict government, to get order in Normandy, which he finally won at the Battle of Tenchebrai, and to hold Normandy, when won, against the French King. He was often hard and selfish in his dealings with the people, but his reign stands out as a period of comparative order and good government between the misrule of William II. and the anarchy of Stephen's reign, and the Chronicle

saw good reason to lament his death. "Then was treason in these lands, for every man that might robbed another. . . . A good man he was, and there was much awe of him. No man durst transgress against another in his time. Peace he made for man and beast. Whoso bare his burden of gold and silver, no man dared say to him aught but good."

(*b*) *The English People.*—The Norman Conquest was followed by a general dispossession of English landowners in favour of Normans—a change which affected all classes of the population, but by which the upper classes suffered more than the lower. William took immediate possession of all the royal demesne lands, and of all the estates of the family of Godwin. This, however, was not sufficient, for the number of his Norman followers who expected to be rewarded with land grants was large, and there is evidence to show that a great deal of the land must have changed hands. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle says that on his return from Normandy in 1067 William "gave away every man's land," and William of Malmesbury says that all the most powerful of the English were deprived of their wealth and estates. In most cases, at best, the English landowner probably held only part of his former estates, and held that part subject to a Norman lord.

The manorial system was rapidly extended. At the time of the Conquest a great deal of the country was still not under manors and there were still many villages without a lord, and though from the Domesday Survey it would seem that the country was covered with manors, probably a good deal of land described there as manorial was not so in the strict sense of the word. After the Conquest, when feudal land tenure was becoming universal, more manors were created; the lands

of the few remaining ceorls and other free landholders were generally merged in some manor, and many towns and villages hitherto free came under manorial authority.

The position of the tenants and serfs on the manor was not widely different from what it had been before, but they were under a Norman instead of an English lord, and there was a tendency to bring them more completely under his control and to regard the manor as his private property. The exact difference between the English classes was not thoroughly understood by the Normans, and on the whole the status of all but the lowest classes on the manor was lowered. The free tenants—the *liberi homines* of Domesday, corresponding to the Socmen of earlier days—were personally free, but had to pay the lord services and dues, and had to attend his courts. The servile tenants—the villeins, bordars, and cottars—were bound to the soil, and neither they nor their children could leave the manor except on payment of a fine. They had to perform week work and work at harvest as before, and they had no legal rights against their lord. Yet, on the other hand, there was little desire on the part of the agricultural population to leave the manor where they had been born; the serf had a customary though not a legal right to his plot of land, and any cases of dispute were decided according to the custom of the manor rather than by the arbitrary will of the lord. The organisation of the manorial village and the cultivation of the land were carried on in much the same way as in Anglo-Saxon times. Moreover, though subject to the lord in all matters that concerned the land, in his relations with the Government the villein was still regarded as a free man, for he was still under the obligation to serve in

the fyrd, he still attended the hundred and shire courts either in person or through his representatives, his oath could still be taken in a court of law, and he still took his part in the work of justice and police.

The English local institutions and customs were maintained, for the Conqueror realised their value in enabling him to maintain order, and to check the power of the barons. The chief changes that took place in the local government were the increase of manorial jurisdiction and the greater power of the sheriff. Before the Conquest, though the profits of justice had frequently been granted away to private persons, the halimot, or court held in the lords' hall, was rather exceptional, but after the Conquest manorial courts soon developed. In addition to the Court Baron—the court of the freemen of the Manor—and the Court Customary, which regulated and enforced the services due from the servile tenants, the lord was often granted the right to hold a Court Leet, and could then exercise criminal jurisdiction which corresponded with that of the Hundred, and when a Franchise was granted his court was on a level with the Court of the Shire. The power of the sheriff was much increased, for he now presided alone as the representative of the King at the head of the Shire Court, and was responsible for the maintenance of order, for the administration of justice so far as it had not fallen into private hands, for the collection of the revenue, the supervision of the royal lands within the shire, and the collection of the fyrd. One of his duties that brought him into closest contact with the people was the View of Frankpledge, probably a development of the Anglo-Saxon Frithbohr. As in earlier days, the people were arranged in groups of ten, all the members of a group being mutually responsible and bound to produce for

trial any one of the group who committed a crime, and twice every year the sheriff had to travel round to every Hundred court in his shire to see that the groups were duly arranged. The sheriff's power was often tyrannically exercised, but until the itinerant justices were sent round by Henry I. no attempt was made to control him.

Although politically their position does not seem to have been much changed, there is plenty of evidence from the chroniclers to show that the people suffered the hardships and indignities that always fall to the lot of a subject race. At this time "it was a disgrace even to be called an Englishman," and notwithstanding the strong order kept by the Conqueror the people suffered considerably in his reign from the heavy exactions of the King and his officials and of the nobles, and had little chance of redress. "Truly in this time men suffered great hardships and very many afflictions. . . . Castles he bade be erected, and poor men greatly oppressed. The King was of great sternness, and took from his subjects many marks of gold and more hundred pounds of silver. . . . The King and his head men loved much and over much covetousness in gold and in silver, and recked not how sinfully it might be got provided it came to them. . . . And he recked not how sinfully his reeves got it from poor men, nor how many illegalities they did; but the more that was said about right law, the more illegalities were done. They levied unjust tolls, and many other unjust things they did which are difficult to reckon" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). Yet, harsh as the Conqueror's rule was, their condition was much worse in the next reign, and the chronicles are full of complaints of the suffering of the people from the plundering of the Court, which ravaged the country

"like an invading army," and from the licence taken now that the strong hand of the Conqueror was withdrawn. William II. "took no care to defend the country folk against his men-at-arms, so that their property was at the entire mercy of the young knights and squires," and "Ralph Flambard, and the other minions and officers of the King, were robbing England, and worse than this, pillaged without mercy the granaries of the farmers and the stores of the merchants." In 1097 "the King fared over sea into Normandy; but whilst he waited for favourable weather his court did the most harm in the shire which ever court or host could do in a land at peace with them." Complaints were also made of "excessive gelds (taxes) which never ceased. Also many shires which belonged to London for work were severely afflicted through the wall which they wrought about the Tower and through the bridge, which was wellnigh all carried away by the flood, and through the building of the King's hall which was erected in Westminster, and many men were oppressed thereby" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). On one occasion the fyrd was summoned for war in Normandy merely as a pretext for getting money, for when the troops were collected on the coast the King took from every man the money which had been given him by the shire, and then sent the force home again. Heavy exactions were imposed as well to get the money required when Normandy was pledged to England by Robert; the clergy were forced to take the gold from the shrines of the saints and melt down the chalices, and the resources of the country were drained to the utmost. In the reign of Henry I. the King was respected, if not loved, and the people realised that it was to their interest to support him against the barons. At the siege of Bridgenorth, when Robert of

Belesme was in revolt, and even the loyal barons wanted Henry to make peace, the fyrd urged him to continue the struggle: "Henry, Lord King, trust not these traitors. . . . For ourselves we are all ready to stand by you faithfully, and second all your undertakings. Press the siege vigorously, close in upon the traitor on all sides, and make no peace till you take him alive or dead." The plundering by the Court was checked, for Henry "made a regulation for the followers of his courts . . . at whichever of his possessions they might be resident, stating what they should accept without payment from the country; and how much and at what price they should purchase, punishing the transgressors by a heavy pecuniary fine or by loss of life" (William of Malmesbury). There are constant complaints in the chronicles of heavy taxation and of the poverty caused by bad seasons and pestilence, but the good order kept gave them a respite from the evils caused by misrule.

(*c*) *Forest Laws, Castles, etc.*—Royal hunting rights had been enforced in later Anglo-Saxon times, but it was only after the Conquest that the Forest Laws were felt as a grievance, for the Norman kings claimed as royal forests not only the restricted area that had been the hunting grounds of the Anglo-Saxon kings, but much of the old folc land that remained unenclosed, and over these districts hunting rights were vested exclusively in the Crown. All the chroniclers note the Conqueror's love of the chase. "He made many a deer preserve, and enacted laws therewith that whosoever should kill hart or hind, him his men should blind. Much he loved the tall deer as if he were their father. . . . Also he made rules about the hares that they might fare free. His great men murmured at it, and the poor men lamented; but he was so very stiff that he recked not the

hate of them all" (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). The charges of cruelty brought against him in connection with the New Forest have probably been much exaggerated. William of Malmesbury says that to make it "he caused churches and villages to be destroyed, and driving out the people, made it an habitation for deer"; but already in this district the Anglo-Saxon kings had reserved large tracts for hunting, and he probably only increased the area and defined the boundaries. Here, as elsewhere, a great deal of the forest land was covered with heath and untimbered.

With this increase of royal forest land in many parts of the country there arose a complete system of forest courts and forest officials, whose work it was to see that the royal rights were not infringed, and the forest laws were very severe. Men who had lands in the districts adjacent to the forests, known as the forest purlieus, were not allowed to destroy any deer that they might find even among their own crops, and the forest officials could enter their lands at any time to drive back the game to the forest, or to cut down brushwood to provide food for the deer in the winter. No hunting was allowed without a licence, which was very rarely granted; special warrants were required for pasturing goats and sheep, or for fishing within the forest limits, or even for picking nuts or taking honey from a hollow tree, and certain industries —brewing, baking, tanning, and bleaching—were prohibited on forest land. No one was allowed to carry a bow and arrow in the forest at any time, or even to pass through the forest at night lest he should "disturb the rest of the beasts." No dogs might be kept in these districts unless they were mutilated by the removal of the claws and ball of the fore-foot. The punishments for infringing the laws were very severe. "If anyone

killed a stag or a wild boar his eyes were put out, and no one dared to complain," and under William II. the slaying of a stag was made a capital offence.

One of the most striking of the immediate results of the Norman Conquest was the building of castles, which arose in considerable numbers, because they afforded security to the Norman lords isolated in the midst of a hostile peasantry. The castles built during the half-century succeeding the Conquest were of the type known as the Motte and Bailey, depending for its strength, not so much on the tower, as on the height of the motte and the depth of the surrounding ditch. The motte was a mound of earth, generally artificial, flat on the top, and thirty or forty, or even occasionally as much as a hundred, feet high. Round the top of the mound was a breastwork of earth crowned with a wooden stockade, and round the foot was a ditch in which there was generally water, though it was sometimes dry. The area at the top was small in comparison with the height, and was in some cases not more than thirty feet across, but it always contained a wooden tower and a "bailey," or courtyard. At the foot of the mound was another and a larger bailey, which was also surrounded by a ditch, joining the ditch of the mound, with the additional defence of an earthen mound and timber stockade. The separation of this outer bailey from the tower by the ditch of the motte points to a time of disturbance, when the lord distrusted all but his immediate followers, and wanted to secure himself if necessary against his garrison and dependents. As the motte might thus be completely isolated, it was necessary for it to be self-sufficing if it was to stand a siege, and hence the tower would always be well stocked with provisions, and in the bailey would be the stables, the forge of the smith, and other

necessary buildings. The approach to the tower was by a wooden bridge across the ditch and by steps up the mound. The towers were always of wood, and were several storeys high. There are none of these castles remaining, but a good idea of their general plan is given by the description of the Castle of Ardres, built about 1117: "The first storey was on the surface of the ground, where there were cellars and granaries and great boxes, tuns, casks, and other domestic utensils. In the storeys above were the dwelling and common living rooms of the residents, in which were the larder, the rooms of the bakers and butlers, and the great chamber in which the lord and his wife slept. Adjoining this was a private room, the dormitory of the waiting-maids and children. . . . In the upper storey of the house were garret rooms (used as bedrooms). . . . High up on the east side of the house . . . was the chapel." There must have been considerable danger from fire in these wooden buildings, and hence there were few, if any, fireplaces, and the cooking was always done in a separate building in the bailey or in the open air.

A few stone castles were built, of which the Tower of London was one, but about 86 per cent. of the early Norman castles were of the Motte and Bailey type, for this was well suited to the needs of the Norman invaders. In the disturbed state of the country at that time there was urgent need for fortifications that could be raised quickly and easily and with little expense, and for these castles the chief work required was digging, for which the services of the peasantry of the neighbourhood could be requisitioned; wood was plentiful in most districts, and for the construction of these wooden defences and towers little skilled labour was required. Castles were generally built in close proximity to towns, but, as the

town population might be hostile, generally without or only just within the town walls, so that there was little danger of communication with the outer world being cut off in case of a rising.

The twelfth century saw the transition from wood to stone as the material most generally used for fortifications. The first step was the development of the so-called "shell keeps"—*i.e.*, the substitution of stone walls, provided later with mural towers, for the wooden stockades; but the wooden tower remained, or, if it was destroyed, was not replaced by a stone one, for the loose soil of the motte could not have supported the weight of a massive stone building. The Adulterine Castles of Stephen's reign, which were raised too rapidly for solidity, were for the most part roughly made stone keeps enclosing wooden buildings.

One of the results of the building of castles was to revolutionise the art of war. In the warfare with the Danes the defeated English had taken refuge, as Alfred had done, in the swamps and forests, but in the Norman period a rebel always withdrew to his castle, which he strengthened against the King, and the siege of castles and the development of military engines for battering down the walls are the chief features of the warfare of this period.

Knighthood under the Normans lost its religious character; it was a military honour conferred now by the King instead of by the priest, and was as well an obligation attached to the possession of land, for the holder of a Knight's Fee—land worth £20 a year—was bound to send a fully armed soldier to serve the King for forty days in the year. The force of mounted knights was now an important element in the army, and armour was much more used. The hauberk, a tunic of mail,

formed of metal rings or plates sewn on leather or cloth, reaching to the knees and provided with a hood of mail, was generally worn; in the twelfth century a tippet of mail with a hood attached to it covered the shoulders, and the arms and legs were completely encased in mail. Over the hood a conical helmet provided with a nasal was worn. The battle-axe, sword and spear were still used, but much greater importance was now attached to the bow and arrow, which for centuries became the chief weapon of the English people. The practice of archery was encouraged by the Government, and by a law of Henry I. no man was to be prosecuted for murder who had accidentally killed anyone when engaged in this pursuit.

William of Malmesbury contrasts the manners of the English, who spent entire nights as well as days in revelry, and consumed their whole substance in mean, despicable houses, with the Normans and French who, in noble and splendid mansions, lived with frugality, and says that the English handed on their vice of drunkenness to their conquerors. There does not seem at first to have been much change in dress, but clothes were getting longer and more elaborate, and all chroniclers complain of the extravagance and folly of the Court of William II. "They part their hair from the crown of the head on each side of the forehead, and let their locks grow long like women, and wear long shirts and tunics tied with points . . . they insert their toes in things like serpent tails . . . sweeping the dusty ground with the prodigious trains of their robes and mantles; they cover their hands with gloves too long and wide for doing anything useful, and encumbered with these superfluities, lose the free use of their limbs for active employment. . . . In former times penitents, captives,

and pilgrims usually went unshaven, and wore long beards as an outward mark of their penance, or captivity, or pilgrimage. Now, almost all the world wear crisped hair and beards. . . . Their locks are curled, and instead of wearing caps they bind their heads with fillets" (Ordericus Vitalis). The Church always protested against these new fashions, and Henry I., a few years later, was so moved by the protests of a French bishop that he allowed his hair to be cut short then and there by the bishop himself—an example that was naturally followed by the Court. Extravagance was only checked for the moment, but in a few years the troubles of Stephen's reign diverted men's thoughts into another channel.

In the twelfth century the Crusades brought about a great commercial revival in Europe, and, though England took no direct part in this, she felt the effects of it through the foreign merchants who bought her wool and visited English fairs, and the closer connection with the Continent brought about by the Conquest was distinctly beneficial to foreign trade. There were already many Frenchmen in England, who had come over in the reign of the Confessor, and after the Conquest a number of Rouen merchants settled in London, which was better situated for trade than their native city. Foreign artisans also came over and settled in the country. The Flemish weavers, driven out of Flanders by inundations, were taken under the personal protection of Matilda of Flanders, the wife of William I., and were afterwards removed by Henry I. to Hereford. The great building activity of the Norman period must also have led to the immigration of builders and masons, and Jews now for the first time came to England in large numbers.

The immediate effect of the Conquest on town life had been disastrous; the population was reduced, and in many of the towns large districts were laid waste for the building of castles. In York, for instance, the number of houses had been reduced from 1,607 to 967, of which 400 had visibly decayed, and one of the wards had been entirely laid waste to build a castle to overawe the city; while in Lincoln, out of 1,150 houses, 166 had been destroyed for castle building, and 74 were in ruins, and other towns were in a similar plight. Moreover, many of the houses that remained were occupied by Normans, or were given to abbeys, and so were free from the burden of taxation, and the few remaining burgesses were expected to contribute as much in taxation as all the rest had done before. The ultimate results of the Conquest were, however, favourable to town development, for the Normans who settled in English boroughs introduced the ideas of municipal independence that were growing up on the Continent, and towns soon began to claim either from the King or from the feudal lord special privileges and jurisdiction.

(*d*) *The Church.*—The effect of the Conquest on the English Church was to strengthen its discipline and to draw more closely the ties with Rome. In later Anglo-Saxon times Church discipline had become very lax; marriage of the clergy was general, simony and pluralism were prevalent, and learning had decayed so much that many of the clergy knew no Latin at all—they "could scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments; and a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment." The connection with Rome had been so slackened that payments to Rome had been discontinued, and the Primate, Stigand, though not recognised by the Pope, was able to fulfil

for many years all the duties of his office, with the single exception of the coronation of the King. Very soon after the Conquest Normans were appointed to all the higher posts in the Church; Stigand was deposed in favour of Lanfranc, and the only English bishop who retained his see was Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, who helped the King to suppress the slave trade between Bristol and Ireland. The character of the episcopate was somewhat changed, for Norman bishops and abbots were feudal barons as well as ecclesiastics, and were forced to pay homage to the King for their lands and to provide soldiers to serve him in war—a duty from which the Anglo-Saxon bishops had been exempt. The seats of the bishoprics were often removed from comparatively unimportant places to the chief towns in the sees.

The bulk of the lower clergy and the monks were still English, and in the monasteries, where the Norman superior was brought into close contact with his English subordinates, trouble was sometimes caused by the change, and several chroniclers give details of the tumult at Glastonbury caused by the violence of the Norman abbot, Thurstan: "Among other doings in his folly, he treated the Gregorian Chant with contempt, and attempted to compel the monks to leave it off, and learn the chant of one William of Fécamp, and sing it. . . . Upon a certain day when they did not expect it, he rushed into the chapter house with an armed body of soldiers, and pursued the monks, who, in their extreme terror, had fled into the church even to the altar, and there the soldiers, piercing the crosses and images and shrines of the saints with darts and arrows, even went so far as to slay one monk while embracing the holy altar, who fell dead pierced with a spear. Another also

fell at the verge of the altar, transfixed with arrows; on which, being compelled by necessity, the monks stoutly defended themselves with the benches and candlesticks belonging to the church, and, though grievously wounded, succeeded in driving all the soldiers beyond the choir. The result was that two of the monks were killed and fourteen wounded; some of the soldiers were also wounded" (Henry of Huntingdon). For this outrage Thurstan was deprived of his office and exiled, but came back in the next reign.

Royal authority was asserted in the Church as elsewhere. Though bringing the Church into much closer contact with Rome and allowing the payment of Peter's Pence to be resumed, William refused to pay the homage which the Pope demanded and which would have meant that England was a papal fief, and he made laws which secured the authority of the King over the Church, forbidding the excommunication of his tenants, or the making of Church laws without his consent. The chief administrative change was the separation of the ecclesiastical from the civil courts, and the consequent formation of special courts held by the bishops and archdeacons to deal with ecclesiastical questions instead of deciding them, as hitherto, in the witan and shire court. This gave the Church more independence, but sowed the seeds of discord between Church and State in the future.

The Conqueror recognised the advantages to be gained from a well-organised Church, but his successor knew no better policy than to plunder the Church for his own advantage. By Ralph Flambard's advice he seized the revenues of vacant bishopries and abbeys: "By this person's suggestion the sacred honours of the Church, as the pastors died, were exposed to sale, for whenever the

death of any Bishop or Abbot was announced, directly one of the King's clerks was admitted, who made an inventory of everything and carried all future rents into the royal exchequer." Even the archbishopric was left vacant when Lanfranc died, and the King farmed out the revenues to the highest bidder, and extorted money from the monks of Christchurch.

The man to whom all looked at this time to succeed to the Primacy was Anselm, an Italian who had been appointed Prior, and then Abbot, of the Monastery of Bec. He was now in England at the invitation of his friend, Earl Hugh of Leicester, who wanted his help and advice in founding a monastery, and when he visited the Palace of Westminster he was already so well known in the country that he was received with all honour by some of the leading nobles, and even the King treated him with respect and listened quietly to a fearless rebuke, though he gave no sign of repentance. At the Council held at Gloucester at Christmas the King was asked to allow prayers to be put up in the churches that his heart might be moved. "Let the Church pray as it may, I shall not therefore desist from doing what I please," was the reply, and it was Anselm who drew up the form of prayer to be used. The following March the King's illness and his fear of death caused a sudden repentance, and sending for Anselm, he offered him the Primacy, but Anselm refused on the ground that he was old and weak, and unfit to bear the burden of such an office. When, in spite of his protests, the pastoral staff was forced into his hands, he gave way reluctantly, for he knew the King's character, and had little faith in his promises:—"The untamed bull to whom ye have yoked me will gore and trample upon the old and feeble sheep, his yoke-fellow." The difficulties he foresaw soon arose.

The King's repentance passed on his recovery, and when Anselm asked that abbots should be appointed to the vacant monasteries he was met with the reply: "What are they to you? The abbeys, are they not mine? May I not do as I please with them, as you do with your manors?" "Yours they are to protect, but not to lay waste, for they belong to God—to maintain his servants, not support your wars," was Anselm's answer, but the remonstrance was without effect. Then followed a quarrel about the sum of money which it was usual for a primate to give to the King on his appointment. Anselm was willing to give £500, but refused the King's demand for a larger sum, on the ground that it was robbing the Church to pay the King.

A more serious dispute arose on the question of papal authority. There were at this time two rival Popes, Urban and Clement. Anselm wanted to acknowledge Urban, but when he asked the King's permission to go to Rome to receive the pall—the white woollen vestment that was the sign of his office—he received the answer: "Know that I have not yet acknowledged that man as Pope. Know likewise that it is not my custom—nor was it my father's—to allow any subject in this realm of England to name anyone Pope unless with my permission, and then it must be the one whom I choose. . . . No man can at one and the same time keep faith with me and obey the Pope against my wishes." At the Council of Rockingham, summoned to decide the question, though the nobles sided with Anselm, royal influence was strong with the bishops, who all, with one exception, "refused to render to the Archbishop the obedience that was his due . . . and showed themselves to be dumb dogs that did not dare to bark." The Council broke up without result, but a few days later a message was sent to Urban

asking him to send the pall, and a further question as to whether it was to be conferred by the King or legate was settled by allowing Anselm to take it from the altar on which the legate had placed it. The following account of the ceremony is given by the Secretary of Anselm: "We hastened to Canterbury, there to await the coming of the Roman legate. On the appointed Sunday the Bishop came, reverently carrying the pallium in a silver casket. He was met by the monks of Christchurch as well as by those of the Abbey of SS. Peter and Paul, and a great multitude of the laity. Then came our Father himself, on his right and on his left being the Bishops who had come to Canterbury for this ceremony. He wore his sacred vestments, but walked with bare feet. With these outward marks of devotion the pallium was carried to the altar, and then assumed by Anselm. Afterwards all present approached, and, kneeling down, kissed it out of reverence for St. Peter." Peace with the King, however, was not entirely restored, and when he complained that the soldiers sent to the Welsh War by the Archbishop were not properly equipped, Anselm decided to leave England. A last indignity was placed upon him when he left the country: "When he was on the point of embarking at Dover, William de Warenast, a friend of the King, ran up to him in a most irreverent manner, and searched not only the Archbishop's sacks, but also the sleeves of his robe and his saddle-bags for money, but found none. The Archbishop, during this process, used not a single word of reproach, nor displayed the least sign of annoyance or offence. When he was gone the public apparitors confiscated to the King all his goods, and also the goods belonging to his see, besides declaring null and void all the useful and honourable acts which Anselm had done during his prelacy."

Anselm was well received by the Pope, and did not return to England during William's life. His recall was one of the first and most popular acts of Henry I., but before long the King and Archbishop were at variance on the question of investitures, which was then disturbing Christendom. The Pope wanted the Church to be independent of lay control, and said that no ecclesiastic was to pay homage to any layman, and that all investiture with the signs of spiritual office should be conferred by an ecclesiastic. Anselm had sworn homage to the King in earlier days, but he had been present at the Council at Rome where these questions had been discussed, and now refused to pay homage to Henry, or to consecrate those bishops who had received the ring and staff from the King. There was no breach of friendly relations, though Anselm left the country again for a time, and finally, under threat of excommunication, Henry agreed to a compromise. "In the presence of Anselm, a great multitude being present, the King asserted and decreed that, from that time forward, no person should ever be invested with a bishopric or abbey by the King, or by any lay hand in England, by the gift of the pastoral staff or of the ring, while Anselm conceded that no person elected to a prelacy should be refused consecration to the dignity so received by reason of the homage which he should perform to the King" (Roger of Hoveden). Bishops were to be elected by the Chapters of the Cathedral, but royal officials were to be present.

Anselm was a man of European reputation. He was an original thinker, a scholar, a theologian, and an educator of advanced views, who advocated "fatherly kindness and gentleness" as more effectual than "the stern pressure of the rod" in dealing with children. Of sufficient strength of character to withstand the King,

the charm of his personality won him universal affection as well as respect. "When he used to teach or give advice, he was especially careful to be most plain spoken . . . and illustrated his meaning as best he could by any homely or familiar example. All men rejoiced at his converse; he gained the love of old and young, of men and women, of rich and poor, and all were glad to minister to him, of so glad and frank a spirit was he to all, and so readily did he enter into their ways, so far as he might without sin" (Eadmer). "None was ever so tenacious of right, none in the present time so thoroughly learned; none so completely spiritual."

The latter part of the eleventh century was a time of monastic activity all over Western Europe; more monasteries were built and new orders were founded with the aim of keeping the monastic rule more strictly than was the case with the Benedictines, who of late years had become lax in discipline. Among these new orders were the Cistercians, who took their name from Citeaux in Burgundy. In the reign of Henry I. some Cistercian monasteries were founded in England, and the monks by their strict adherence to their rule won general respect. "Their order," said William of Malmesbury, "was the surest road to Heaven. . . . Certainly many of their regulations seem severe, and more especially these. They wear nothing made with furs or linen. . . . No additional garments in winter, though, if they think fit, in summer they may lighten their garb. They sleep clad and girded. . . . They complete whatever labour or service they have to perform by day without any other light. No one is ever absent from the daily services. . . . The Abbot allows himself no indulgences beyond the others. . . . Everywhere present . . . everywhere attendant to his flock, except that he does

not eat with the rest because his table is with the strangers and the poor. Nevertheless, be he where he may, he is equally sparing of food and speech, for never more than two dishes are served to him or to his company; lard and meat never but to the sick. From the ides of September to Easter . . . they do not take more than one meal a day except on Sunday. They never leave the cloisters but for the purpose of labour, nor do they ever speak, either there or elsewhere, save only to the Abbot or Prior. . . . While they bestow care on the stranger and the sick, they inflict intolerable mortifications on their own bodies for the health of their souls. . . . The Cistercian monks at the present day are a model for all monks, a mirror for the diligent, and a spur for the indolent." The Cistercian monasteries generally remained isolated in the depth of the country, and they later became wealthy by pasture farming, the wool of the Cistercians being a favourite source of taxation for the Pope.

(*e*) *The Reign of Stephen.*—The reign of Stephen is the only time in English history when the nobles were able to enjoy the feudal independence that they had on the Continent, and, by showing the horrors that devastated a country abandoned to the unrestrained licence of a feudal nobility, it forms a justification for the severity of the rule of the Norman kings. Stephen of Blois, son of the Conqueror's daughter Adela, was a good knight and personally brave, but of weak character, and quite unable to keep order in the country, and the anarchy that resulted made it possible for Matilda, the daughter of Henry I., to push her claim to the Crown.

Trouble began almost at once, and only three years after Stephen's accession the following description of the country was given by William of Malmesbury: "In the

year of our Lord, 1138, England was shaken with intestine commotions. For many persons, emboldened to illegal acts, either by nobility of descent or by ambition, or rather by unbridled heat of youth, were not ashamed, some to demand castles, others estates, and indeed whatever came into their fancy, from the King. When he delayed complying with their requests . . . they, becoming enraged, immediately fortified their armies against him, and drove away large booties from his lands. Nor indeed was his spirit at all broken by the revolt of any, but attacking them suddenly in different places, he always concluded matters more to his own disadvantage than to theirs; for, after many great and fruitless labours, he gained from them by the grant of honours or castles, a peace, feigned only for a time. He created likewise many earls where there had been none before, appropriating to them possessions and rents which rightfully belonged to the Crown. They were the more greedy in asking, and he the more profuse in giving, because a rumour was pervading England that Robert, Earl of Gloucester, who was in Normandy, would shortly espouse the cause of his sister after first renouncing his fealty to the King."

The following year Stephen increased his difficulties by attacking Roger of Salisbury and his friends, and with their fall the last traces of the administrative order established by Henry I. disappeared, and "all things declined for lack of justice." The Scotch King, invading the North of England on behalf of his niece Matilda, was driven back by the men of the North at the Battle of the Standard, but Robert of Gloucester landed in the South, declaring for Matilda, and a desultory civil war began. "The whole of this year (1140) was embittered by the horrors of war. There were many castles throughout

England, each defending their neighbourhood, but more properly speaking, laying it waste. The garrisons drove off from the woods both sheep and cattle. Seizing such of the county vavasours as were reputed to be possessed of money, they compelled them by extreme torture to promise whatever they thought fit. Plundering the houses of the wretched husbandmen even to their very beds, they cast them into prison, nor did they liberate them but on their giving everything they possessed or could by any means scrape together for their release. . . . It was distressing, therefore, to see England . . . reduced to such a pitch of misery that not even the Bishops or monks could pass in safety from one town to another. Under King Henry many foreigners who had been driven from home by the commotions of their native land, were accustomed to resort to England and rest in quiet under his fostering protection; in Stephen's time numbers of freebooters from Flanders and Brittany flocked to England in expectation of rich pillage" (William of Malmesbury). "Where the King spent Christmas and Easter it matters not, for now all that made the court splendid . . . had disappeared. The treasury, before well filled, was now empty; the kingdom was a prey to intestine wars; slaughter, fire, and rapine spread ruin throughout the land; cries of distress, horror, and woe rose in every quarter" (Henry of Huntingdon).

The warfare was desultory; it was a war of sieges of castles without any definite plan or aim. Neither Stephen nor Matilda could exercise control over their followers, and the barons were fighting, not to secure the crown for either claimant, but to maintain their feudal independence and to enjoy the unbridled licence which the policy of the Norman kings had hitherto made impossible. Hence no decisive advantage was gained by

either side. Stephen was taken prisoner at the Battle of Lincoln, but was shortly afterwards exchanged for Robert of Gloucester; Matilda entered London, but offended the citizens and withdrew to Oxford, escaping to France during the siege of the city. After the Treaty of Wallingford, 1153, by which it was arranged that Henry, the son of Matilda, should succeed Stephen, some attempt was made to get order.

The condition of the country during this reign is thus described by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: "When the traitors perceived that he (Stephen) was a mild man and soft and good, and did no justice, then did they all wonder. They had done homage to him and sworn oaths, but had held no faith; they were all forsworn, and forfeited their troth; for every powerful man made him castles and held them against him, and they filled the land full of castles. They cruelly oppressed the wretched men of the land with castle works. When the castles were made they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those men that they imagined had any property, both by night and by day, peasant men and women, and put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with unutterable torture, for never were martyrs so tortured as they were. . . . Many thousands they killed with hunger. I neither can nor may tell all the wounds or all the tortures which they inflicted on wretched men in this land; and that lasted the nineteen winters that Stephen was King, and ever it was worse and worse. They laid imposts on the towns continually. . . . When the wretched men had no more to give they robbed and burned all the towns, so that thou mightest well go all a day's journey and thou shouldst never find a man sitting in a town or the land tilled. Then was corn dear, and flesh and cheese and

butter, for there was none in the land. Wretched men died of hunger; some went seeking alms who at one while were rich men; some fled out of the land. Never yet had more wretchedness been in the land, nor did heathen men ever do worse than they did, for everywhere at times they forbore neither church nor churchyard, but took all the property that was therein, and then burned the church altogether. Nor forbore they a Bishop's land nor an Abbot's, nor a priest's, but robbed monks and clerks and every man another who anywhere could. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the township fled before them, imagining them to be robbers. The Bishops and clergy constantly cursed them; but nothing came of it, for they were all accursed and forsworn and lost. However a man tilled, the earth bare no corn, for the land was all fordone by such deeds, and they said openly that Christ and His saints slept. Such and more than we can say we endured nineteen winters for our sins."

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